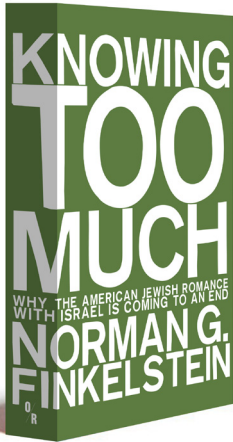


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# KNOWING TOO MUCH

WHY THE AMERICAN JEWISH ROMANCE  
WITH ISRAEL IS COMING TO AN END

NORMAN G.  
FINKELSTEIN

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**KNOWING TOO MUCH**



# KNOWING TOO MUCH

Why the American Jewish Romance  
with Israel Is Coming to an End

NORMAN G. FINKELSTEIN



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**The overarching theme** of this book is that American Jews are significantly liberal and, because many myths surrounding Israel have been punctured in recent years, Jews can no longer reconcile their liberal convictions with blind support for it. Many American Jews have consequently begun to distance themselves from Israel.

A reverse dynamic has been at play in Israel itself. Whereas American Jewish society remains significantly liberal, Israeli Jewish society has become significantly conservative. It has already been shown that, politically, Israeli Jews are a mirror image of American Jews.<sup>1</sup> One upshot is that liberal Israeli intellectuals seeking to keep pace with Israel's rightward lurch have been forced to abandon their liberal values and, in order to defend policies that are indefensible on the factual record, to reject their own past scholarship. The most (in)famous case is Benny Morris, who is probably the best known historian on the Israel-Palestine conflict and whose work has most contributed to revealing the underside of Israel's history. In recent years Morris has repudiated his own original research in order to shore up Israel's image.

Morris's odyssey from liberal to court historian illustrates from another angle the thesis of this book. Whereas American Jews have clung to liberal values and forsaken Israel, Morris has forsaken these values as he clings to Israel. In both cases, however, the operative factor has been self-interest: American Jews have benefited enormously from liberal ideology and a liberal state; Morris has sought to curry favor with and join the ranks of a state that has become resolutely un-liberal. Morris most resembles the Jewish neoconservatives who discarded their former liberalism when American society drifted rightward and put their talents at the disposal of the new conservative political establishment.





## 10/ HISTORY BY SUBTRACTION

A large part of this book documents that in recent times a new scholarly consensus has crystallized on the Israel-Palestine conflict that casts Israel in a much harsher light than hitherto. A striking anomaly appears to be the corpus of Israeli historian Benny Morris. Widely acclaimed as one of the leading “new historians,” Morris played a critical role in molding the current scholarly consensus. Morris himself took issue with the designation “new historians” on the ground that the original, *Exodus*-like accounts of Israel’s past did not constitute genuine history: “Israel’s old historians, by and large, were not really historians and did not produce real history. In reality, they were chroniclers, and often apologetic, interested chroniclers at that.”<sup>1</sup>

During the past decade, however, Morris has been given to lashing out at, and defending the old orthodoxy against, critics of Israel. It is accordingly a quandary whether to characterize him now as a “new” or “old” historian and—more to the point—whether to treat Morris’s output as genuine scholarship or, in his preferred terminology, as belonging to the category of “apologetic, interested chroniclers.”

One, as it were, compromise position has been to acknowledge the “stridency and darkness of some of his public pronouncements” while also asserting that Morris’s scholarship “makes every attempt at depth and balance.”<sup>2</sup> Such a bifurcation is theoretically tenable. For instance

Shlomo Ben-Ami is both a trained historian and a diplomat. In the first half of his book, *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace*,<sup>3</sup> Ben-Ami renders a scrupulous account of Israel's past, but in the second half he replaces his historian's hat with his diplomat's chapeau and produces a largely apologetic account of the 2000-1 peace negotiations where he served as Israel's chief representative.

In the case of Benny Morris, however, the two compartments, professional and political, have never been watertight, the seepage making Morris the historian virtually inseparable from Morris the ideologue. It is nonetheless undeniable that on balance the old Morris *was* a new historian producing serious scholarship.<sup>4</sup> It is equally undeniable that the new Morris has become an old historian churning out "apologetic, interested" tracts.

An unorthodox new historian not too long ago, Morris has in effect reinvented himself in recent times as an orthodox old historian. The process has been incremental, the quantitative degeneration becoming at a certain point qualitative.<sup>5</sup> Although disfigured in ways small and large by ideological bias, Morris's earlier works such as *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949*,<sup>6</sup> *Israel's Border Wars, 1949-1956: Arab infiltration, Israeli retaliation, and the countdown to the Suez war*,<sup>7</sup> *Righteous Victims: A history of the Zionist-Arab conflict, 1881-1999*,<sup>8</sup> and *The Road to Jerusalem: Glubb Pasha, Palestine and the Jews*<sup>9</sup> brought to light a wealth of novel information. The body of his subsequent major work, *1948: The first Arab-Israeli war*,<sup>10</sup> preserves a standard of scholarly rigor, but his conclusion crosses the threshold to crude distortion. His most recent volume, *One State, Two States: Resolving the Israel/Palestine conflict*<sup>11</sup>—published incidentally by Yale University Press, which also released the *Foxbats over Dimona* hoax<sup>12</sup>—lacks any redeeming value and reeks of rancid propaganda.

Whereas he did not break new conceptual ground, the old Morris did roam the archives and cull revealing documents on the Israel-Palestine conflict that he then collated into a fresh, compelling narrative of the past. Once an industrious clerk, the new Morris has metamorphosed into a raging kook. In all fairness to him, it is of course arguable that Morris has honestly

come to reconsider his former conclusions on the basis of new evidence; to discover that, however deficient their scholarship, the conclusions of the old historians were right after all. The problem is that Morris does not adduce new evidence to support his return to the old orthodoxy, but rather whites out the findings of his own pioneering research. This genre might be called doing history not by accretion but by subtraction.



The conclusion of *Righteous Victims*, Benny Morris's sweeping "history of the Zionist-Arab conflict," opened with a quote from Zionist leader (and Israel's future first prime minister) David Ben-Gurion. The "conflict" with the Arabs, Ben-Gurion said in 1938, "is in its essence a political one. And politically we are the aggressors and they defend themselves." Morris then observed: "Ben-Gurion, of course, was right. Zionism was a colonizing and expansionist ideology and movement. . . . Zionist ideology and practice were necessarily and elementally expansionist." Insofar as "from the start its aim was to turn all of Palestine . . . into a Jewish state," he went on to elaborate, Zionism could not but be "intent on . . . dispossessing and supplanting the Arabs." Or, as Morris formulated it earlier on in his book, "Jewish colonization meant expropriation and displacement" of the indigenous population.<sup>13</sup> These consequences of Zionism, and the Arab resistance they inexorably generated, would figure as signature themes in Morris's scholarly corpus.

A fundamental challenge for Zionism was how to create a Jewish state, which meant minimally a state the population of which was overwhelmingly Jewish, in an area the population of which was overwhelmingly not Jewish. One novelty of Morris's original scholarship was to point up the centrality of "transfer"—a euphemism, as Revisionist Zionist leader Zeev Jabotinsky put it, for "brutal expulsion"<sup>14</sup>—to resolving this dilemma. Insofar as orthodox Israeli historians had treated it, they consigned the idea of transfer to a footnote, downplaying it as incidental to the Zionist enterprise. Thus, Shabtai Teveth purported that the Zionist movement only "here

and there” and “briefly” contemplated transfer, while according to Anita Shapira the Zionist movement conceived transfer merely as a “good thing” that it could just as well “do without.”<sup>15</sup>

But Morris contended in his groundbreaking study, *Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*, that, on the contrary, from the mid-1930s “the idea of transferring the Arabs out . . . was seen as the chief means of assuring the stability of the ‘Jewishness’ of the proposed Jewish State,”<sup>16</sup> while in *Righteous Victims* he wrote that “the transfer idea . . . was one of the main currents in Zionist ideology from the movement’s inception.”<sup>17</sup> In another seminal essay Morris documented that “thinking about the transfer of all or part of Palestine’s Arabs out of the prospective Jewish state was pervasive among Zionist leadership circles long before 1937.”<sup>18</sup>

In a greatly expanded version of *Birth*,<sup>19</sup> Morris gave over fully 25 densely argued pages to documenting the depth and breadth of “the idea of ‘transfer’ in Zionist thinking.” His conclusion merits full quotation:

[T]ransfer was inevitable and inbuilt into Zionism—because it sought to transform a land which was “Arab” into a “Jewish” state and a Jewish state could not have arisen without a major displacement of Arab population; and because this aim automatically produced resistance among the Arabs which, in turn, persuaded the Yishuv’s leaders that a hostile Arab majority or large minority could not remain in place if a Jewish state was to arise or safely endure.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, in Morris’s temporal-logical sequence of the conflict’s genesis, Zionist transfer was cause and Arab resistance effect in an ever-expanding spiral. He put forth a sequence of succinct and copiously documented formulations on this crucial point in *Righteous Victims*: “The fear of territorial displacement and dispossession was to be the chief motor of Arab antagonism to Zionism down to 1948 (and indeed after 1967 as well);” “In the 1880s there were already Arabs who understood that the threat from

Zionism was not merely a local matter or a by-product of cultural estrangement. ‘The natives are hostile towards us, saying that we have come to drive them out of the country,’ recorded one Zionist settler”; “[T]he major cause of tension and violence . . . was . . . the conflicting interests and goals of the two populations. The Arabs sought instinctively to . . . maintain their position as [Palestine’s] rightful inhabitants; the Zionists sought radically to change the status quo . . . and eventually turn an Arab-populated country into a Jewish homeland. . . . The Arabs, both urban and rural, came to feel anxiety and fear.”<sup>21</sup>

In the conclusion of *Righteous Victims*, Morris reiterated that the Arabs’ trepidation and ensuing opposition were “solidly anchored in a perception that [Zionist] expansion . . . would be at the expense of their people, principally and initially those living in Palestine itself.”<sup>22</sup> As Morris originally reckoned it, Arab fear was rational—because transfer was “inevitable and inbuilt into Zionism”—and Arab resistance natural—because it sprang “automatically” from the Zionist goal of transfer. The root of the conflict was accordingly located in a historical clash between Zionism and the indigenous Arab population of Palestine and the historical (if not moral) onus for engendering the conflict was placed squarely on the shoulders of the Zionist movement.<sup>23</sup>

The new Morris however has a very different story to tell. He drastically reduces the salience of transfer in Zionism; locates the genesis of the conflict in “Islamic Judeophobia”; and reckons transfer as a Zionist *reaction* to this Judeophobia and the “expulsionist” tendency inherent in it. Cause and effect have magically been reversed: expulsionist Judeophobia—which is inevitable and inbuilt *into Islam*—is the cause, Zionist transfer—which automatically springs from Islamic Judeophobia—the effect. The onus for engendering the conflict is now placed by Morris squarely on the shoulders of the Arabs, while Zionists are depicted as the innocent victims of a lethal Muslim intolerance towards Jews.

According to this new Morris, transfer initially figured as but a “minor and secondary element” in Zionism; “it had not been part of the original

Zionist ideology”; key Zionist leaders only “occasionally” supported transfer “between 1881 and the mid-1940s”; and “its thrust was never adopted by the Zionist movement . . . as ideology or policy” until the late 1940s.<sup>24</sup> Whereas the old Morris asserted that “the logic of a transfer solution to the ‘Arab problem’ remained ineluctable” for the Zionist movement, and “without some sort of massive displacement of Arabs from the area of the Jewish state-to-be, there could be no viable ‘Jewish’ state,”<sup>25</sup> the new Morris alleges that “the Zionist leaders generally said, and believed, that a Jewish majority would be achieved in Palestine, or in whatever part of it became a Jewish state, by means of massive Jewish immigration, and that this immigration would also materially benefit the Arab population.”<sup>26</sup>

If Zionists eventually came to embrace transfer, according to the new Morris, it was only in reaction to “expulsionist or terroristic violence by the Arabs,”<sup>27</sup> “expulsionist Arab thinking and murderous Arab behavior,”<sup>28</sup> which were “indirectly contributing to the murder of their [the Zionists’] European kinfolk by helping to deny them a safe haven in Palestine and by threatening the lives of the Jews who already lived in the country.”<sup>29</sup> Transfer has inexplicably metamorphosed from an “inevitable and inbuilt” component of Zionism into a response “triggered”<sup>30</sup> by expulsionist Arab threats and assaults, not to mention Arab complicity in the Nazi holocaust.

Indeed, in the narrative frame crafted by the new Morris the indigenous population of a country has metamorphosed into expulsionists. Many cruel and unforgivable things have been said by American historians about our native population, but it took a peculiarly fecund Israeli mind to pin the label “starkly expulsionist”<sup>31</sup> on an indigenous population resisting expulsion. To document this “expulsionist mindset,”<sup>32</sup> Morris cites the testimony of a Palestinian delegation before a foreign commission of inquiry: “We will push the Zionists into the sea—or they will send us back into the desert.”<sup>33</sup> Insofar as the Zionists were intent on “transferring the Arabs out,” it is unclear how this statement manifests malevolence. Doesn’t an indigenous population have the right to resist expulsion?

The new Morris alleges that “Arab expressions in the early years of the twentieth century of fear of eventual displacement and expulsion by the Zionists were largely propagandistic.”<sup>34</sup> He seems to have forgotten that he himself pointed up this fear as the “chief motor of Arab antagonism to Zionism” and that he rationally grounded this fear in Zionist transfer policy. Morris now purports that the Arabs’ resistance to Zionism sprang from their thralldom to the notion of “sacred Islamic soil”; was “anchored in centuries of Islamic Judeophobia”; and reached into “every fiber of their Islamic, exclusivist being.”<sup>35</sup> After Israel’s establishment Ben-Gurion conceded, “If I was [sic] an Arab leader I would never make [peace?] terms with Israel. That is natural: We have taken their country.” Morris alleges however that because of his ignorance of the Arab world Ben-Gurion failed to grasp that this rejection of Israel was not “natural” but rather rooted in Islamic “abhorrence” of Jews.<sup>36</sup> Insofar as Morris is not known for his expertise on Islam, and insofar as he used to be known for not speculating a hair’s breadth beyond what his sources showed, it might be expected that he would copiously substantiate such gross generalizations. But Morris’s elucidation of 14 centuries of an allegedly hate-filled “Muslim Arab mindset” and “Muslim Arab mentality” consists of all of one half paragraph of boilerplate.<sup>37</sup>

Coming to the modern period Morris alleges that “since the *fin de siècle*, Palestine Arabs had been murdering Jews on a regular basis for ethnic or quasinationalist reasons. . . . Arab mobs had assaulted Jewish settlements and neighborhoods in a succession of ever-larger pogroms.”<sup>38</sup> But the old Morris found that it was the very real prospect of Zionist transfer that “automatically produced resistance among the Arabs.” Morris appears also to have forgotten what he earlier wrote about Zionist resort to self-serving epithets: “anti-Zionist outbreaks were designated ‘pogroms,’ a term that belittled the phenomenon, demonized the Arabs, and, in a peculiar way, comforted the Jews—it obviated the need to admit that what they faced was a rival national movement, rather than Arabic-speaking Cossacks and

street ruffians.”<sup>39</sup> Is this perhaps why Morris now designates Arab resistance “pogroms”?

The new Morris laments that “historians have tended to ignore or dismiss, as so much hot air, the jihadi rhetoric” of the Arabs, and he counters that “the evidence is abundant and clear” that the struggle against Zionism was conceived by Arabs “essentially as a holy war.”<sup>40</sup> But the old Morris himself barely mentioned the “jihadi” factor and it was Morris himself who declared that the “chief motor” of Arab opposition to Zionism was not “jihad” but the “fear of territorial displacement and dispossession.”

To prove that Palestinian resistance was driven by a jihadi “impulse,”<sup>41</sup> the new Morris cites these statements: a “penitent land seller” swore, “I call on Allah, may He be exalted, to bear witness and swear . . . that I will be a loyal soldier in the service of the homeland”; the mufti of Egypt declared that the Jews intended “to take over . . . all the lands of Islam”; the ulema of Al-Azhar denoted it a “sacred religious duty” for “the Arab Kings, Presidents of Arab Republics, . . . and leaders of public opinion to liberate Palestine from the Zionist bands . . . and to return the inhabitants driven from their homes.”<sup>42</sup> It would not however be the first or last time that God and religion were invoked in a patriotic struggle: Stalin rehabilitated the Greek Orthodox Church in the battle against Nazism, Gandhi utilized the Hindu religion at every turn in resistance to British occupation, Bush conscripted a Christian god for homeland security and the War on Terror.

In fact, although the old Morris took note that “the Arab radicalization often took on a religious aspect,” and that “increasingly the points of friction with the Zionists were, or became identified with, religious symbols and values,”<sup>43</sup> he nonetheless recognized that the “chief motor” of Arab resistance was fear of displacement and dispossession. The new Morris reports that “even Christian Arabs appear to have adopted the jihadi discourse” of “holy war.”<sup>44</sup> But doesn’t this contrarily show that, although utilizing the “jihadi discourse” of “holy war,” the opposition to Zionism was *not* “anchored in centuries of Islamic Judeophobia”? He purports that, in light of their “expulsionist and, in great measure, anti-Semitic” mindset, “it



is unsurprising that the Arab mobs that periodically ran amok in Palestine's streets during the Mandate . . . screamed '*idhbbah al yahud*' (slaughter the Jews)."<sup>45</sup> Yet, as Yehoshua Porath observed in his magisterial study of Palestinian nationalism, although Arabs initially differentiated between Jews and Zionists, it was "inevitable" that opposition to Zionism would turn into a loathing of all Jews: "As immigration increased, so did the Jewish community's identification with the Zionist movement. . . . The non-Zionist and anti-Zionist factors became an insignificant minority, and a large measure of sophistication was required to make the older distinction. It was unreasonable to hope that the wider Arab population, and the riotous mob which was part of it, would maintain this distinction."<sup>46</sup> If the Arabs shouted "*idhbbah al yahud*," it was because nearly every Jew they encountered *was* a Zionist bent, according to the old Morris, on expelling them.

It is instructive to recall here the old Morris's treatment of the first intifada. He reported that "in the Gaza Strip, Islamic Jihad and other fundamentalists immediately took a leading role," "Hamas was a major component of the rebellion in the Strip and, to a lesser extent, the West Bank," and "from the start the Hamas and Islamic Jihad dominated the rebellion in the Gaza Strip"; that these Muslim fundamentalist organizations espoused "Koran-based hatred and contempt for Jews," intended "to wage a holy war against the Zionist enemy," and "made the destruction of Israel" their "official goal"; and that the intifada commenced as "thousands poured out of the alleys of Jibalya and other Gaza camps for the funerals, shouting '*jihad, Jihad!*,'" and "fundamentalists . . . had been in the forefront of the demonstrations in December 1987."<sup>47</sup>

Still, Morris was emphatic that "the main energizing force of the intifada was the frustration of the national aspirations" of the Palestinians, "who wanted to live in a Palestinian state and not as stateless inhabitants under a brutal, foreign military occupation."<sup>48</sup> And again, after expatiating on jihadi influences, he cautioned: "But the factors that made individual Palestinians take to the streets and endure beating, imprisonment, and economic privation were predominantly socioeconomic and psychological"—such as the

“continuous trampling of the[ir] basic rights and dignity,” and their fear that “Israel’s settlement policy and its discriminatory economic policies” prefigured “the government’s ultimate intent to dispossess them and drive them out and to replace them with Jews.”<sup>49</sup>

The old Morris—the pre-propagandist Morris—was able to discern that although Islamic zealots figured prominently in the first intifada and Islamic symbols and texts, even hateful anti-Semitic ones, might have been pervasive, its “main energizing force” was not hoary “Islamic Judeophobia” but the mundane denial of basic Palestinian rights. Even in his account of the second intifada, when the salience of the Islamic component was yet greater and he himself was already given to tirades against jihadis, Morris emphasized that “at base” the revolt resulted from “the state of the Palestinians and the peace process . . . the frustrations and slights endured since the signing in 1993 of the Oslo agreement, and more generally since the start of the occupation.”<sup>50</sup>

The new Morris alleges that “many observers defined the [1936-39] Arab Revolt as a jihad.” He cites the concerns of some Christians that are jotted down in a random “note” of an “unknown” member of the Peel Commission.<sup>51</sup> But Morris omits mention of what the Peel Commission itself found. “The overriding desire of the Arab leaders . . . was . . . national independence,” the landmark Peel Report stated, and “It was only to be expected that Palestinian Arabs should . . . envy and seek to emulate their successful fellow-nationalists in those countries just across their northern and southern borders.” There was “no doubt,” the Report concluded, that the “underlying causes” of Arab-Jewish hostilities were “first the desire of the Arabs for national independence; secondly their antagonism to the establishment of the Jewish National Home in Palestine, quickened by their fear of Jewish domination.”

However much the new Morris might like to conscript the Peel Commission for his own ideological jihad, its Report in fact explicitly repudiated the notion that Arab opposition to Zionism was born of primordial hatred:

Nor is the conflict in its essence an interracial conflict, arising from any old instinctive antipathy of Arabs towards Jews. There was little or no friction . . . between Arab and Jew in the rest of the Arab world until the strife in Palestine engendered it. And there has been precisely the same political trouble in Iraq, Syria and Egypt—agitation, rebellion and bloodshed—where there are no “National Homes.” Quite obviously, then, the problem of Palestine is political. It is, as elsewhere, the problem of insurgent nationalism. The only difference is that in Palestine Arab nationalism is inextricably interwoven with antagonism to the Jews. And the reasons for that, it is worth repeating, are equally obvious. In the first place, the establishment of the National Home [for Jews] involved at the outset a blank negation of the rights implied in the principle of national self-government. Secondly, it soon proved to be not merely an obstacle to the development of national self-government, but apparently the only serious obstacle. Thirdly, as the Home has grown, the fear has grown with it that, if and when self-government is conceded, it may not be national in the Arab sense, but government by a Jewish majority. That is why it is difficult to be an Arab patriot and not to hate the Jews.<sup>52</sup>

Not the sacredness of “Islamic soil,” not “Islamic Judeophobia,” not an “Islamic, exclusivist being,” not a “jihadi impulse,” but rather Zionism’s “negation” of the indigenous Arab population’s right to self-determination and the concomitant Arab fear of Jewish domination—a domination that, according to the old Morris, would perforce result in “transferring the Arabs out”: those were “no doubt” and “quite obviously” the roots of Arab resistance to Zionism, according to the Peel Commission, a resistance that was “only to be expected.” In fact, according to the old Morris, Zionism “automatically produced” this resistance.

The new Morris gestures at one point to the Palestinians' "expulsionist, or eliminationist mindset."<sup>53</sup> *Eliminationist* was a neologism popularized by the now discredited Holocaust-monger Daniel Jonah Goldhagen to characterize the anti-Semitic German mindset allegedly responsible for the Nazi holocaust.<sup>54</sup> One problem with Goldhagen's thesis was that he could not explain why, if Germans had been afflicted for centuries with an eliminationist Judeophobic mindset, the Final Solution occurred when the Nazis came to power and not long before.<sup>55</sup>

The new Morris has appropriated Goldhagen's neologism but, alas, also the problem that comes in its train. If the "expulsionist, or eliminationist mindset" of Arabs was "anchored in centuries of Islamic Judeophobia," why did it manifest itself after the advent of Zionism whereas hitherto there had been "little or no friction . . . between Arab and Jew"? It is of course arguable that the picture painted by the Peel Report was a mite rosy and that the old Morris was closer to the truth when he asserted that historically Jews in the Islamic world were treated with "contemptuous tolerance" (quoting Elie Kedourie). But even so, Morris himself also then acknowledged that "generally the Jews' lot was not a matter of violence," and that "the nineteenth century witnessed a gradual change for the better in the Jews' status."<sup>56</sup>

The violent clashes that commenced at the turn of the twentieth century and then relentlessly escalated, the old Morris understood, marked a qualitatively new development. Zionism was to introduce a unique—indeed, judging by the old Morris, a uniquely toxic—ingredient into the brew of Arab-Jewish relations. Morris pointedly signaled this critical rupture in his volume's subtitle, "A history of the Zionist-Arab conflict, 1881-1999." Contrariwise, a typical propagandist for Israel such as Joan Peters titled her book, "*From Time Immemorial: The origins of the Arab-Jewish conflict over Palestine*."<sup>57</sup> The conflict was not "immemorial" for the old Morris and fundamentally not a conflict between Arab and Jew, but rather of relatively recent vintage and fundamentally between Arab and *Zionist*. However, the new Morris has discarded his prodigious scholarly apparatus demonstrating the historically specific nature of this "Zionist-Arab" encounter and instead cribbed a vacuous formula and

hitched it to an ahistorical framework—an “expulsionist, or eliminationist mindset” that was “anchored in centuries of Islamic Judeophobia”—for which he adduces not a scrap of evidence and the heuristic value of which is nil, but which possesses the singular virtue of exonerating Zionism of any culpability for the unfolding Palestinian catastrophe.



The old Morris’s account of Israeli treatment of Palestinian civilians during combat and under occupation consisted of both *exposé* and extenuation. It could not be said that he was an apologist, but it also could not be said that he was wholly free of apologetics. The new Morris, however, carries on like an unabashed party hack. One winces in embarrassment not so much at what he says, which is just plain laughable, but at what he has become.

The old Morris was one of the seminal Israeli historians who debunked many of the myths surrounding the first Arab-Israeli war. For example he documented that contrary to the David versus Goliath myth “the truth . . . is that the stronger side, in fact, won,” “the Jews . . . were better organized, had more men under arms (the Arab armies lacked equipment for some of their troops and others had to be left at home to guard shaky regimes) . . . —in short, they were stronger.”<sup>58</sup> But in a 180-degree reversal, the new Morris alleges that although Israel won the 1948 war it was “*not* because it had more manpower or more equipment.”<sup>59</sup>

To Morris’s credit, he was also among the first historians to document Israeli massacres during the 1948 war. Even in his propagandistic conclusion to 1948, Morris forthrightly observes that “Jews committed far more atrocities than the Arabs.” Nevertheless, although reporting that Palestinian Arabs barely fought in the 1948 war, and although providing estimates that 6,000-12,000 Palestinian Arabs were killed in the course of it, he asserts in 1948 that the victims of Israeli atrocities numbered only “some eight hundred,” or about 10 percent of all Palestinian deaths.<sup>60</sup> The figure and percentage also seem improbably low in light of Morris’s assertion in another context that “the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] has progressively become a ‘cleaner’

army,” and that its record “when it comes to *tohar haneshek* [purity of arms]” was “far better” in the 1982 Lebanon war than in 1948.<sup>61</sup> To judge by authoritative accounts of Israel’s “cleaner” war in 1982,<sup>62</sup> premeditated and indiscriminate Israeli atrocities accounted for a large proportion of civilian deaths. Morris’s minimization of Israeli atrocities during the 1948 war appears to spring from his persistently tendentious usage of the term. Thus, the old Morris’s account of the Zionist army’s climactic assault on Haifa in April 1948 depicted “completely indiscriminate and revolting machinegun fire and sniping on women and children,” and “hysterical and terrified Arab women and children and old people on whom the Jews opened up mercilessly with fire.”<sup>63</sup> Yet even back then, and despite his own evidence, Morris averred that he “found no evidence of any ‘atrocities’ committed in Arab Haifa during and after its capture.”<sup>64</sup>

The old Morris published a remarkably frank account of Israel’s conflicts with its Arab neighbors after the 1948 war in *Israel’s Border Wars*. He pinned the lion’s share of culpability on Israel for the escalation of postwar hostilities that climaxed in its invasion of the Egyptian Sinai in 1956. The basic outline of the story he told (and on which historians now generally agree)<sup>65</sup> went like this. After the armistice agreement was signed in 1949, “Cairo’s overriding concern in its relations with Israel was to avoid sparking IDF attacks,” “Egypt generally sought tranquility along its border with Israel.”<sup>66</sup> But “from some point in 1954,” IDF Chief of Staff Moshe Dayan “wanted war, and periodically, he hoped that a given retaliatory strike would embarrass or provoke the Arab state attacked into itself retaliating, giving Israel cause to escalate the shooting until war resulted.”<sup>67</sup> The “policy of trapping [Egyptian President Gamal Abdel] Nasser into war” through incremental provocation “was hammered out between Ben-Gurion and Dayan”: “because Israel could not afford to be branded an aggressor, war would have to be reached by a process of gradual escalation, to be achieved through periodic, large-scale Israeli retaliatory attacks in response to Egyptian infractions of the armistice.”<sup>68</sup>

Nasser reversed his “policy of restraint” after Ben-Gurion and Dayan instigated the “Gaza Raid” in February 1955 that left some 40 Egyptian

soldiers dead. It “mark[ed] a clear watershed: Before the raid, Egyptian policy had, with few exceptions, consistently opposed civilian infiltration; after it, while continuing to oppose uncontrolled infiltration, the Egyptian authorities themselves initiated terrorist infiltration.”<sup>69</sup> But when Egypt still “refused to fall into the successive traps set by Dayan,”<sup>70</sup> who sought a credible *casus belli*, Israel colluded with Britain and France to attack Egypt outright.<sup>71</sup>

The old Morris also forthrightly depicted Israeli atrocities in *Border Wars*. Israel killed “perhaps as many as 5,000” Palestinian refugees who infiltrated the state after its establishment. The “vast bulk” (“90 percent and more”) of these casualties comprised “unarmed ‘economic’ and social infiltrators” retrieving their abandoned possessions, harvesting crops they had sown, and reuniting with family members left behind.<sup>72</sup> The Palestinian deaths resulted directly from “state-authorized, or at least, permitted killing of unarmed civilians,” the “overall attitude” of Israeli authorities being that “killing, torturing, beating and raping Arab infiltrators was, if not permitted, at least not particularly reprehensible and might well go unpunished.”

Under the subheading “Atrocities,” Morris gave over several pages of *Border Wars* to delineating the ghoulish deaths inflicted by the IDF, and he also carefully documented the “massacres” Israel committed in Gaza after occupying it during the Sinai invasion, when “Israeli troops killed between 447 and 550 Arab civilians.”<sup>73</sup> In addition Morris reported that Palestinian infiltrators killed up to 250 Israeli civilians between 1949 and 1956, but only “a small proportion of Jewish casualties was caused by infiltrators who set out with the intent to kill or injure Jews.” He variously attributed “most” of these Jewish deaths to “unpremeditated encounters” and somewhat inconsistently to Palestinian infiltrators “motivated by hatred and, in many cases revenge—revenge for the national and personal wrongs and injuries inflicted during 1948 or during subsequent border incidents.”<sup>74</sup>

The new Morris, however, has reversed his causal framework for the 1956 war. He entirely omits mention of the pivotal facts that “from some point in 1954” Israeli leaders “wanted war” and sought to provoke Nasser

militarily “until war resulted.” Instead we are now told that the build-up to the war began with “terroristic infiltration, certainly from 1954 on, [that] was organized by the Egyptian government”; that the “Israeli raid on Gaza in February 1955 . . . probably had very little to do with the substance of [Nasser’s] policies” after the Israeli attack; that “Israel responded” to Egyptian-orchestrated attacks “with retaliatory raids”; and that these Egyptian-orchestrated raids were one of the “very basic *casus belli* presented by Egypt” that impelled Israel to invade in 1956. Cause—i.e., Israeli leaders “wanted war” with Egypt—has become effect—i.e., “Israel responded” to unprovoked Egyptian-backed attacks; provocation—i.e., Israel attacked Egypt to elicit a pretext for war—has become self-defense—i.e., Egyptian-backed attacks constituted a “very basic *casus belli*” for Israel. Morris also sanitizes the Israeli record for the 1949-56 period, during which, he now alleges, Israel “almost exclusively” targeted combatants—the thousands of Palestinian infiltrators killed as a result of Israeli “atrocities” vanish from the printed page—while the Arabs alone stand guilty of killing civilians.<sup>75</sup>

In his rendering of Israel’s more recent confrontations the old Morris similarly combined revelatory research with recycled apologetics. Consider his account of the 1982 Lebanon war. He candidly reported that Israel “spent the months between August 1981 and June 1982 seeking a pretext to invade Lebanon”; that the PLO “took great pains not to violate the [cease-fire] agreement of July 1981”; that “subsequent Israeli propaganda notwithstanding, the border between July 1981 and June 1982 enjoyed a state of calm unprecedented since 1968”; and that Israel’s “broader objective” in the 1982 invasion was “the destruction of the PLO and its ejection from Lebanon,” which would leave Israel “a far freer hand to determine the fate of the West Bank and Gaza Strip,” and would compel Palestinians to “give up their national political aspirations altogether or look to their fulfillment in Jordan.”<sup>76</sup>

Still, the old Morris’s account of Israeli armed clashes with Lebanon before, during and after the June 1982 invasion lapsed into state propaganda. In his tally of total Arab casualties during Israel’s 1978 invasion of Lebanon



(Operation Litani) “about 300 Palestinian fighters were killed, several hundred wounded, and several dozen captured,”<sup>77</sup> yet Human Rights Watch (HRW) cited the figure for total Arab casualties of “about 1,100 dead, the great majority of them civilians.”<sup>78</sup>

The old Morris also repeatedly alleged that during the 1982 Lebanon war Israel was “reluctant to harm civilians,” sought to “avoid casualties on both sides,” and “took care not to harm Lebanese and Palestinian civilians.” Although he acknowledged “the massive use of IDF firepower against civilians” during the siege of Beirut, which “traumatized Israeli society” (luckily Beirutis weren’t traumatized . . . ), Morris quickly entered the caveat that Israel “tried to pinpoint military targets, but inevitably many civilians were hit.”<sup>79</sup> It might be noticed that Morris had a personal stake in putting a humane veneer on Israeli conduct: he personally served in the Lebanon war and participated in the siege of Beirut. In any event the picture painted in authoritative accounts, based on voluminous testimony by unimpeachable sources and witnesses, did not remotely resemble Morris’s account of Israeli solicitude for civilians.<sup>80</sup>

It is instructive to juxtapose Morris’s rendering against the “war diary” of Dov Yermiya, a veteran Israeli soldier (he was a battalion commander in the 1948 war) and the oldest soldier to serve in the 1982 invasion. In his daily record of the Lebanon war Yermiya *inter alia* jotted down: “the war machine of the IDF is galloping and trampling over the conquered territory, demonstrating a total insensitivity to the fate of the Arabs who are found in its path”; “a PLO-run hospital suffered a direct hit”; “Thousands of refugees are returning to the city. . . . When they arrive at their homes, many of which have been destroyed or damaged, you hear their cries of pain, and their howls over the deaths of their loved ones”; “The air is permeated with the smell of corpses; destruction and death are continuing. . . . I am ashamed to be a son of this nation, this arrogant, condescending, cruel nation”; “It seems that a solitary Arab sniper fired a round in the direction of our forces. In retaliation—a feast of fire from all our weapons”; “Never have I seen a war such as this. Is this a war, or a huge IDF practice range?”;

“This was a picture that reminded me of the death march of the Jews in Auschwitz [an operations officer tells Yermiya after a file of prisoners staggered by]”; “A population overtaken by war could have received urgently needed aid, like powdered milk for babies and children, but . . . we, a merciful people, the sons of merciful fathers, do not allow these vital supplies to be brought to the population”; “They make a numbers game out of the refugees and homeless. The media speak of 600,000. Here [headquarters] they throw around numbers like 200,000 and 400,000. They play with numbers as though they were speaking about birds or insects”; “The district commander announces in his disgusting style: ‘Another prisoner stopped smoking today.’ Earlier, I had learned that a prisoner who had been beaten and tortured died. . . . The commanders were only concerned that it be written in the death certificate that the prisoner died of a heart attack”; “this is what I ran into every step of the way: despicable actions of humiliation, of striking at women and children who wander, confused and miserable, along the sidelines of the war and its aftermath, not knowing their own souls in their fright, hunger, and thirst”; “firepower had been directed toward the entire camp, without any connection to the degree of enemy opposition, which was highly ineffective and sparse”; “the barrages only hurt the non-combatant population. They caused both killings and the destruction of buildings in a most systematic manner, which . . . was not meant to hurt terrorists, but rather, to eliminate the possibility of the existence of refugees in this camp.”<sup>81</sup>

In extenuation of IDF outrages Morris alleged that PLO militants in the refugee camps “fought grimly, occasionally using civilians as human shields.” But Yermiya reported that “the story that the civilian population had been held hostage by the PLO, and prevented from responding to the IDF’s call to leave the camp . . . was totally unfounded,” and that “the PLO demonstrated no significant resistance.”<sup>82</sup>

Whereas Morris alleged that “Israel tried to pinpoint military targets” during the siege of Beirut, Robert Fisk in his classic eyewitness account *Pity the Nation* reported: “To call the gunfire indiscriminate was an

understatement. It would also have been a lie. The Israeli bombardment of 4 August was, we realized, later, *discriminate*. It targeted every civilian area, every institution in west Beirut—hospitals, schools, apartments, shops, newspaper offices, hotels, the prime minister’s office and the parks. Incredibly, the Israeli shells even blew part of the roof off the city’s synagogue.”<sup>83</sup> Although it is unclear how Morris measured trauma levels in Israel during the terror bombing of Beirut, it can be gauged from numerous opinion polls that overwhelmingly Israeli society supported this brutal war of aggression while it unfolded, and still overwhelmingly believed it was justified in retrospect.<sup>84</sup>

In 1996 during Operation Grapes of Wrath, another of Israel’s periodic rampages in Lebanon, Israel shelled the U.N. compound at Qana killing more than a hundred Lebanese civilians taking refuge there. Morris alleged that Israel “accidentally” hit the camp, and that the presence of Lebanese civilians was “unbeknownst” to it.<sup>85</sup> But an exhaustive Amnesty International investigation concluded that “the IDF intentionally attacked the UN compound,” and that Israel “must have had knowledge or should have assumed” that the compound was providing shelter for “a considerable number of refugees.”<sup>86</sup>

The old Morris’s account of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and of the first intifada was only slightly marred by apologetics. To be sure, unlike in the case of the Lebanon war, Morris had no personal stake in whitewashing Israeli conduct. On the contrary he was among the few Israelis who refused on moral grounds to serve in the occupied territories during the first intifada.<sup>87</sup>

Morris forthrightly reported that “the overwhelming majority of West Bank and Gaza Arabs from the first hated the occupation”; that “Israel intended to stay in the West Bank, and its rule would not be overthrown or ended through civil disobedience and civil resistance, which were easily crushed. The only real option was armed struggle”; that “Like all occupations, Israel’s was founded on brute force, repression and fear, collaboration and treachery, beatings and torture chambers, and daily intimidation,

humiliation, and manipulation”; and that the occupation “was always a brutal and mortifying experience for the occupied.”<sup>88</sup> The old Morris additionally pointed up the non-martial character of the first intifada: “It was not an armed rebellion but a massive, persistent campaign of civil resistance, with strikes and commercial shutdowns, accompanied by violent (though unarmed) demonstrations against the occupying forces. The stone and, occasionally, the Molotov cocktail and knife were its symbols and weapons, not guns and bombs.”<sup>89</sup>

Although occasionally resorting to exculpating caveats such as “the IDF tried to restrict the use of firearms to life-threatening situations,”<sup>90</sup> the old Morris generally provided a harrowing account of brutal and methodical Israeli repression during the first intifada: “Almost everything was tried: shooting to kill, shooting to injure, beatings, mass arrests, torture, trials, administrative detention, and economic sanctions”; “a large proportion of the Palestinian dead were not shot in life-threatening situations, and a great many of these were children”; “Only a small minority of [the IDF] malefactors were brought to book by the army’s legal machinery—and were almost always let off with ludicrously light sentences.”<sup>91</sup>

It must be acknowledged that the old Morris shone a harsh light on many dark corners of Israeli treatment of the Palestinians, but it must also be said that the credibility Morris thereby garnered then lent legitimacy to his more propagandistic pronouncements. It is not possible however to detect any saving grace in the new Morris, who spews forth an irrepressible stream of unalloyed hate and lies. Were it not for Morris’s past reputation, these morally obscene utterances would have been peremptorily dismissed as the rantings of a crackpot. Many of his statements have already been subjected to critical commentary.<sup>92</sup> The ensuing remarks will focus on ground not already covered.

Most of the new Morris’s relevant remarks bear on the second intifada. However, the new Morris’s perverse mindset can also be glimpsed in his retrospective commentary. Whereas the old Morris reported that during and right after the June 1967 war hundreds of thousands of Palestinians “fled or

were driven from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip,”<sup>93</sup> the new Morris alleges that they “moved” elsewhere.<sup>94</sup> (Did they use *Shalom* or *Shleppers* van line?) Whereas the old Morris depicted the first intifada as “not an armed rebellion but a massive, persistent campaign of civil resistance” against the “occupying forces,” the new Morris alleges that the first intifada was a “semi-armed revolt against Israel.”<sup>95</sup> Why then did he refuse to serve during the first intifada?

In his account of the first intifada the old Morris made extensive use of the findings of human rights organizations such as the Palestinian human rights organization al-Haq and particularly the Israeli human rights organization B’Tselem.<sup>96</sup> The new Morris totally disregards the findings of human rights organizations as well as critical reportage (much of it Israeli) and critical statements by Israeli officials. He resorts instead to mind-numbing repetition—in a smugly authoritative tone and without adducing a shred of corroborative evidence—of official government press releases.

Thus Morris alleges that during the second intifada Israel displayed “great restraint,” “praiseworthy discrimination,” “extreme restraint in face of acute provocation,” and was “always cautious and restrained”; “Israeli policy was to avoid, so far as possible, harm to noncombatants, and the IDF generally took great operational care to avoid civilian casualties,” “Care was taken [by Israel] not to hit collateral targets and non-rioting and non-shooting bystanders,” “The Israelis . . . took care, often great care, not to kill civilians”; and “most of the Arabs killed . . . were armed fighters, not civilians.” If the picture appeared otherwise, according to the new Morris, it was because of “Western, Arab and Israeli television crews” that “almost never arrived on the scene in time to catch who had started a given firefight,” and because gullible “Western journalists,” and “Arab and Western press reports” gave credence to the “never-ending torrent of Palestinian mendacity” and particularly to Yasir Arafat’s Palestinian Authority, “a virtual kingdom of mendacity,” rather than to the “straight, or far less mendacious, Israeli officials.”<sup>97</sup>

The documentary record however confutes Morris on all points. The 2001 Mitchell Report found that the second intifada initially consisted of

“demonstrations of unarmed Palestinians.”<sup>98</sup> The IDF manifested its alleged “extreme restraint in face of acute provocation” (Morris) by firing “in the first few days about 700,000 bullets and other projectiles in Judea and Samaria and about 300,000 in Gaza” (according to Israeli intelligence)—or, as one Israeli officer quipped, “a bullet for every child.”<sup>99</sup> The new Morris cannot decide whether to reckon this Israeli display of firepower overreactions “or underreactions.”<sup>100</sup>

Human rights organizations copiously documented the ensuing “care, often great care, not to kill civilians” that Israel allegedly showed. Amnesty found that “the majority of people killed were taking part in demonstrations where stones were the only weapon used. . . . Many persons were apparently killed by poorly targeted lethal fire; others . . . appear, on many occasions, to have been deliberately targeted.”<sup>101</sup> HRW reported “a pattern of repeated Israeli use of excessive lethal force during clashes between its security forces and Palestinian demonstrators in situations where demonstrators were unarmed and posed no threat of death or serious injury to the security forces or to others.”<sup>102</sup>

Although Morris accurately reports that “armed Palestinians, hiding behind or among the rioters, joined in with occasional shots,”<sup>103</sup> HRW still found that “where gunfire by Palestinian security forces or armed protesters was a factor, use of lethal force by the IDF was indiscriminate and not directed at the source of the threat.” Furthermore B’Tselem reported that “Palestinians did not open fire in the vast majority of demonstrations. The soldiers responded to these demonstrations by using excessive and disproportionate force, leading to many casualties, including children.”<sup>104</sup> Whereas Morris alleges that the IDF was “on order to use live fire only in life-endangering situations,”<sup>105</sup> B’Tselem reported that “regulations apparently enable firing in situations where there is no clear and present danger to life, or even in situations where there is no life-threatening danger at all.”<sup>106</sup>

The new Morris purports that during the second intifada “most of the Arabs killed . . . were armed fighters, not civilians,” and that “by 2004, altogether some four thousand Palestinians—about two-thirds of them armed

men—and thirteen hundred Israelis—about two-thirds civilians—had died.”<sup>107</sup> But Amnesty, citing this 3:1 ratio, reported, “The vast majority of those killed and injured on *both* sides have been unarmed civilians and bystanders.”<sup>108</sup> If Israel appeared not to be exercising “extreme restraint,” it was according to Morris because of credulous television crews and Western journalists. He forgets to mention not only credulous human rights organizations, including those based in Israel, and credulous Israeli journalists, but also credulous Israeli officials. For instance, a former head of internal Israeli intelligence publicly declared during the second intifada that “we are behaving disgracefully. Yes, there is no other word for it. Disgracefully.”<sup>109</sup> But according to Morris there are other words: “cautious,” “restrained” . . .

The new Morris alleges that Israel’s “liquidation policy” during the second intifada consisted of “pinpoint strikes” on “specific local Fatah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad commanders who were suspected of mounting” attacks on Israelis, and it targeted “individual terrorists and their controllers.”<sup>110</sup> He forgets to mention that as a result of these so-called pinpoint strikes “scores of men, women and children bystanders have been killed and hundreds have been injured,” according to Amnesty. “Claims that efforts are made not to harm bystanders are inconsistent with the practice of carrying out attacks on busy roads and densely populated areas.”<sup>111</sup>

Morris goes on to observe that Israel’s liquidation policy “was challenged by [Ehud] Barak’s left-wing critics; Arab human rights organizations and criticized by the United States.”<sup>112</sup> He forgets to mention that not just Arab but international human rights organizations such as Amnesty as well as Israeli human rights organizations such as B’Tselem and the Public Committee against Torture in Israel (PCATI) deplored the political liquidations that—according to them—amounted to extrajudicial executions, PCATI calling the policy a “heinous crime both legally and morally.”<sup>113</sup> Morris also forgets to mention that opposition to the liquidations emanated not just from Israeli “left-wing critics,” but also from reserve pilots in the Israeli air force who declared in a public letter their refusal to participate any longer in such an “illegal and immoral” policy.<sup>114</sup>

The climax of the second intifada came in April 2002 when Israel invaded West Bank cities during Operation Defensive Shield. Dismissing criticism of the operation as “fantasy or propaganda,” Morris (alongside Ehud Barak) alleged that “no army has ever been more discriminating and gone to such lengths to avoid inflicting civilian casualties.”<sup>115</sup> Indeed, consider Israel’s “discriminating” siege of Jenin refugee camp. Human rights organizations found that “Israeli forces committed serious violations of humanitarian law, some amounting *prima facie* to war crimes” (HRW), and “the IDF carried out actions which violate humanitarian law; some of these actions amount to . . . war crimes” (Amnesty).<sup>116</sup>

Whereas Morris alleges that only “several dozen homes” were destroyed in the course of the whole operation, HRW reported that just in Jenin refugee camp “at least 140 buildings—most of them multi-family dwellings—were completely destroyed . . . , and severe damage caused to more than 200 others has rendered them uninhabitable or unsafe. An estimated 4,000 people, more than a quarter of the population of the camp, were rendered homeless because of this destruction.” HRW further noted that “the destruction extended well beyond any conceivable purpose of gaining access to fighters, and was vastly disproportionate to the military objectives pursued,” while Amnesty reported that “in one appalling and extensive operation, the IDF demolished, destroyed by explosives, or flattened by army bulldozers, a large residential area of Jenin refugee camp, most of it after the fighting had apparently ended.”

“I left them a football stadium in the camp,” one of Morris’s “discriminating” IDF soldiers operating a bulldozer in Jenin chortled. “I wanted to destroy everything,” he told an interviewer. “I begged the officers . . . to let me knock it all down, from top to bottom. To level everything. . . . For three days I just destroyed and destroyed. . . . I found joy with every house that came down, because I knew that they didn’t mind dying, but they cared for their homes. If you knocked down a house, you buried 40 or 50 people for generations. If I am sorry for anything, it’s for not tearing the whole camp down. . . . I had plenty of satisfaction. I really enjoyed it.”<sup>117</sup>



At least 22 civilians were killed in Jenin refugee camp during Operation Defensive Shield (Morris alleges “five or six”), among them, a “37-year-old paralyzed man was killed when the IDF bulldozed his home on top of him, refusing to allow his relatives the time to remove him from the home,” and a “57-year-old wheelchair-bound man . . . was shot and run over by a tank on a major road outside the camp . . . even though he had a white flag attached to his wheelchair” (HRW). Israel not only committed comparable human rights violations and war crimes in Nablus, according to Amnesty, but it also razed “religious and historical sites . . . in what frequently appeared to be wanton destruction without military necessity.” It appears that B’Tselem executive director Jessica Montell also fell victim to “fantasy or propaganda” when she censured Israel’s “vengeful assault on all symbols of Palestinian society and Palestinian identity” during the operation and the “hooliganism” of “thousands of teenage boys and young men in uniform allowed to run wild in Palestinian cities with no accountability for their actions.”<sup>118</sup> In a rare allusion to the findings of a human rights organization the new Morris alleged that “Human Rights Watch and other non-partisan bodies subsequently upheld the Israeli version” of events at Jenin. Taking “strong exception” to his assertion, HRW stated in a public rebuke that “Morris mischaracterizes the findings of Human Rights Watch.”<sup>119</sup>

The new Morris chides Western journalists for not crediting the “straight, or far less mendacious, Israeli officials,” whom he himself faithfully echoes. But (far too) many Western journalists did defer to them. It was respected *Israeli* journalists who ridiculed Morris’s primary source during the second intifada. “The state authorities, including the defense establishment and its branches,” Uzi Benziman observed in *Haaretz*, “have acquired for themselves a shady reputation when it comes to their credibility.” The “official communiqués published by the IDF have progressively liberated themselves from the constraints of truth,” B. Michael editorialized in *Yediot Ahronot*, and the “heart of the power structure”—police, army, intelligence—has been infected by a “culture of lying.”<sup>120</sup>

Beyond bamboozling credulous Westerners during the second intifada, “Palestinian spokespeople,” according to Morris, orchestrated the “designation of Israeli policies as ‘apartheid.’”<sup>121</sup> But the roster of those bracketing Israeli policies with apartheid also happens to include many prominent Israelis.<sup>122</sup> And far from being a recent development, already a quarter century ago knowledgeable Israelis such as Danny Rubinstein had sounded the alarm that Israel was “creating a system of apartheid in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.”<sup>123</sup>

Although Arafat indisputably presided over a “kingdom of mendacity,” judging by the new Morris’s depiction of the second intifada, he has managed to fabricate a kingdom of his own that rivals it.



It is well established and largely undisputed that Palestinians opposed the partition proposals of the Peel Commission in 1937 and the United Nations General Assembly in 1947.<sup>124</sup> Orthodox Israeli historians such as Shabtai Tevet had already conceded that not only the Palestinians but also the Zionist movement in principle opposed the Peel Commission’s partition proposal: for Ben-Gurion it was merely “a stage in the longer process toward a Jewish state in all of Palestine.”<sup>125</sup> The “new historians” went a step further as they demonstrated that the Zionist movement also opposed in principle the U.N. Partition Resolution assigning the Jewish state 56 percent of Palestine. “The acceptance of partition, in the mid-1930s *as in 1947*,” Morris reported, “was tactical, not a change in the Zionist dream.”<sup>126</sup> Both prior and subsequent to the passage of the Partition Resolution in November 1947, Ben-Gurion was emphatic that “We want the Land of Israel in its entirety” (May 1947), and that the boundaries assigned Israel in the Partition Resolution were “not final” but subject to revision should the occasion allow (December 1947).<sup>127</sup> When, in 1948, circumstances seemed ripe to achieve these goals, Zionist leaders “embarked . . . on a campaign aimed at a new definition of the borders of their state” (Shlomo Ben-Ami),<sup>128</sup> and by war’s end Israel controlled 78 percent of Palestine.

The old Morris brought to bear a wealth of evidence documenting that even after the 1948 war Israel still coveted the remnants of Palestine beyond its control, and more: “A strong expansionist current ran through both Zionist ideology and Israeli society. There was a general feeling, shared by such prominent figures as Dayan and Ben-Gurion, that the territorial gains of the 1948 war had fallen short of the envisioned promised land. *Bechiya LeDorot*—literally a cause for lamentation for future generations—was how Ben-Gurion described the failure to conquer Arab East Jerusalem; leading groups in Israeli society regarded the Jordanian-controlled West Bank with the same feeling”; “Large sections of the Israeli public, including many in its political and military elite . . . , were keen on expansion, optimally down to the Jordan River. . . . Indeed, key Israeli leaders between 1949 and 1956 viewed the Kingdom of Jordan itself as an ‘artificial’ and ‘unnatural’ country that could not in the long run survive and would eventually be divided up and absorbed by its more powerful neighbors, with the West Bank going to Israel and the East Bank to Iraq.”<sup>129</sup>

In the aftermath of the 1948 war Israeli leaders consequently awaited, surveyed, planned and plotted an “opportunity” that could be exploited in order to expand their country’s borders.<sup>130</sup> Once a concrete occasion availed itself in 1956, when Israel colluded with Britain and France to attack Egypt, Ben-Gurion drew up an extravagant blueprint to annex the West Bank, south Lebanon and parts of the Sinai. It was the French, according to the old Morris, who “gently brought Ben-Gurion down to earth.”<sup>131</sup>

After Israel invaded the Sinai, the old Morris further reported, Ben-Gurion declared “Israel’s historic right to the island of Tiran, which he identified with Yodfat, where a Jewish kingdom had existed in the sixth century A.D. The message was clear—Israel had no intention of withdrawing from Sinai.” Alongside other Israeli leaders Ben-Gurion homed in on Gaza and the Sinai as “the cradle of our transformation into a nation and the harbingers of hopes for the future,” and as integral to a greater Israel, part and parcel of “the third Jewish kingdom.”<sup>132</sup> Although forced by international pressure to withdraw from the bulk of the Sinai, Ben-Gurion still held out the prospect

of retaining Gaza and Sharm-el-Shaykh, but Washington demanded a full Israeli withdrawal.<sup>133</sup> “It was an expansionist war,” the old Morris concluded, “Ben-Gurion and Dayan hoped it would lead to Israel’s occupation and annexation of tracts of Egyptian territory in the Sinai Peninsula.”<sup>134</sup>

In a weird throwback to what the Russian revolutionist Leon Trotsky called the “Stalinist school of falsification,” the new Morris inters the whole of the historical record that the old Morris so painstakingly exhumed. Although acknowledging that the Zionist leaders’ “aim from the start was the conversion of the whole country into a Jewish state,” and that they envisaged the Peel Commission’s partition proposal “as a springboard for a future expansion of Jewish sovereignty,”<sup>135</sup> the new Morris alleges that by 1947 “the Zionist mainstream, including Ben-Gurion, *internalized* and came to accept the *principle* of partition.”<sup>136</sup> He additionally purports that Zionist leaders “full-throatedly hailed the UN partition resolution . . . and endorsed a two-state solution. . . . This time, unlike in 1937, Ben-Gurion’s declarations had the ring of sincerity.”<sup>137</sup>

But the old Morris reported that “the acceptance of partition, in the mid-1930s as in 1947 was tactical, not a change in the Zionist dream,” and none other than Ben-Gurion himself repeatedly avowed right before and after passage of the Partition Resolution that the borders designated for the Jewish state were provisional, not final. The new Morris alleges that Ben-Gurion “was to remain fixed in his advocacy of partition throughout the 1948 War while supporting the limited expansion of Israel at the expense of parts of the areas allotted to the Palestinian Arabs.”<sup>138</sup> But by the end of the war the Zionist armies had conquered fully 78 percent of Palestine and, if Ben-Gurion did not also conquer the West Bank, it was not because he had “internalized . . . the principle of partition,” but because—as the old Morris reported—such a conquest would have triggered a war with Britain and “burdened Israel . . . with more than half a million additional Arabs.”<sup>139</sup>

One cannot but marvel at—or be nauseated by—how the new Morris disposes of inconvenient facts:<sup>140</sup>

- “It is true that on 26 September [1948] he [Ben-Gurion] tabled a motion supporting a renewed IDF offensive in parts of the West Bank . . . which . . . would have added East Jerusalem, and perhaps the whole of the West Bank, to the Jewish state, but he probably knew in advance that his fellow ministers would reject it, as they did in the vote that afternoon.” But if he had “internalized . . . the principle of partition,” why did Ben-Gurion table the motion in the first place?
- “And later, in March 1949, just before the signing of the Israel-Jordan armistice agreement, when IDF general Yigal Allon proposed conquering the West Bank, Ben-Gurion turned him down flat. Like most Israelis, Ben-Gurion had given up the dream of the whole land and had internalized the necessity, indeed inevitability, of partition.” But why then did Ben-Gurion and other Zionist leaders subsequently regard Israel’s failure to conquer East Jerusalem and the West Bank as “a cause for lamentation for future generations,” and why did Ben-Gurion contemplate annexation of the West Bank during the Sinai invasion?
- “Even Ben-Gurion, who occasionally during the first post-1948 War years toyed with the idea of expansion, in the end always pulled back, his natural caution overcoming his ideological predisposition.” But wasn’t it the French who “brought Ben-Gurion down to earth” when he put forth his wildly expansionist agenda, and didn’t the Americans later coerce him despite his protestations to withdraw from the Sinai and Gaza? The new Morris seems also to have forgotten that, according to him, Ben-Gurion no longer had an “ideological predisposition” to expansion but rather had “internalized . . . the principle of partition.”

If Israel’s borders did not expand between 1949 and 1967, it was not because, as the new Morris alleges, its leaders “preferred the territorial status quo,”<sup>141</sup> but because—however much they longed, and endeavored

to exploit any opportunity, for territorial aggrandizement—the status quo proved intractable. That is, until June 1967.

The old Morris was less forthright on Israel's territorial ambitions during the June 1967 war. He reported that "it was not part of Israel's original intentions to conquer the West Bank or parts of Syria"; that "of Israel's political leadership, only Dayan appears to have contemplated, before the outbreak of the fighting, conquering the West Bank"; that "Israel had hoped on the morning of June 5 to confine the war to Egypt"; that "once the fate of the Egyptian army had become clear to the decision-makers, thoughts of offense began to supersede defense in Israeli thinking vis-à-vis the West Bank and East Jerusalem," but "the possibility of conquering the West Bank and East Jerusalem" was tabled by Israeli leaders "without any advance preparation, without working papers, without knowing anything about political or military plans"; and that once King Hussein initiated hostilities on the Jordanian front the IDF "thrust into the West Bank without a clear plan for conquering the territory." The only caveats—in fact, *contradictory* indications—Morris entered in this depiction of Israeli innocence were that some Israeli leaders appeared eager to "exploit to the full" any missteps of Hussein because they lamented Israel's failure in the 1948 war to conquer East Jerusalem and the West Bank; that "IDF planning . . . took into account the possible entry of Jordan and Syria into the war"; and that "from the beginning of the crisis in mid-May, the head of the IDF Northern Command . . . maintained that the war would inevitably spread to the Syrian front and that it would be necessary to capture the Golan Heights."<sup>142</sup>

It might be said in extenuation of the old Morris that research on the June 1967 war was still in an inchoate state when he made these assertions, and that he himself was careful to qualify his account as being based on "the documentation so far available."<sup>143</sup> Nonetheless, he was able to quote influential Labor Party official Yigal Allon from a few days before the June war stating, "In . . . a new war, we must avoid the historic mistake of the War of Independence . . . and must not cease fighting until we achieve total victory, the territorial fulfillment of the Land of Israel."<sup>144</sup> One would be

hard-pressed to reconcile statements such as this, cited by Morris, with his concurrent assertions that “it was not part of Israel’s original intentions to conquer the West Bank” and that “of Israel’s political leadership, only Dayan appears to have contemplated, before the outbreak of the fighting, conquering the West Bank.”

In trying to make sense of the old Morris’s apologetic depiction, it might be noticed that he has typically deferred to Israeli orthodoxy except when his own personal research proved otherwise, and he has not done original research on the 1967 war.<sup>145</sup> In addition, the old Morris was always more revelatory on historical topics that no longer had a political resonance. He could accordingly be quite candid about what transpired in the course of Zionist settlement through Israel’s founding in the 1948 war because Israel’s existence has long ceased to be an object of political (or military) contestation.<sup>146</sup> But the Palestinian refugee problem still endures, and its practical resolution is still subject to negotiation, which perhaps accounts for the ten thousand caveats Morris enters on what happened to them in 1948, making it impossible to pin him down: however his position is characterized by others, Morris invariably protests that he has been misrepresented.

As his historical scholarship edged closer to the present, the old Morris became ever more apologetic. His account of the 1967 war barely if at all departed from the orthodox Israeli narrative, virtually none of which holds up in light of current research. The repercussions of the June 1967 war—in particular the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza—are still charged political issues, so Morris, always the most political of historians, has been careful not to let his findings subvert Israel’s diplomatic posture.

In any event, Morris’s depiction of Israeli innocence on the eve of its territorial conquests in June 1967 cannot be sustained. The cumulative scholarly evidence is overwhelming that Israeli leaders desired and planned to conquer the West Bank and Gaza in the event of a new war and waited only for the opportunity to implement these long-incubating ideological-strategic goals.<sup>147</sup> The new Morris has no problem reconciling this copious documentary record with his allegation that already before 1947 the Zionist

leadership had “internalized and come to accept the principle of partition” because he has comprehensively effaced it.

Beyond alleging that Israeli leaders historically supported partition, the new Morris makes the auxiliary assertion that Israeli leaders—at least those affiliated with Labor—have historically supported a “two-state solution”<sup>148</sup> whereas Palestinians have uniformly and right up to the present opposed it. The consensus understanding of the “two-state” solution, which is anchored in the 1947 Partition Resolution, denotes an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza, and the Palestinian exercise of self-determination and statehood in these territories. It has been ratified by multiple authoritative bodies including the United Nations General Assembly and the International Court of Justice.<sup>149</sup>

Israeli leaders “firmly opposed” a Palestinian state from the start of the occupation, according to the old Morris, and right through the first intifada they “appeared determined that there would be . . . no Palestinian state.”<sup>150</sup> In light of the record he himself documented it would be quite the feat if the new Morris could demonstrate that Israel’s most influential political figures historically championed a two-state settlement. He meets this daunting challenge by resort to linguistic subterfuge. The two-state settlement is construed by him to denote the partition of Palestine *even if it is at the expense of, indeed negates, Palestinian self-determination and statehood*—or, as he euphemistically puts it, with “Jordan rather than the Palestinian Arabs as the political beneficiary,” and “no Palestinian state.” Thus, he dubs a “two-state solution” the Zionist leadership’s secret negotiations with King Abdullah in 1946–47 to partition Palestine not with the Palestinians but the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; he dubs a “two-state solution” the partition of Palestine between Israel and Jordan at the end of the 1948 war; and he dubs a “two-state solution” Israel’s Allon Plan formulated after the 1967 war to divide the West Bank with Jordan.<sup>151</sup> Although Morris acknowledges that “even Rabin had not formally endorsed two ‘states’”<sup>152</sup>—neither Yitzhak Rabin nor Shimon Peres conceived a Palestinian state emerging from the 1993 Oslo agreement<sup>153</sup>—it does not prevent the new Morris from



simultaneously alleging that Labor leaders supported a “two-state solution,” because it is of no account to him whether such a solution affirms or aborts Palestinian self-determination.

His rechristening a resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict that negates Palestinian self-determination as a “two-state solution” enables the new Morris to project as fact a fictitious image of Israeli moderation. In one variant of this fiction, the new Morris alleges, “Traditionally, since 1967, what had divided left from right was the left’s willingness to compromise and make territorial concessions for peace and, ultimately, to *agree to a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza*.”<sup>154</sup> But the old Morris showed that the Israeli left was just as opposed as the Israeli right to a Palestinian state.

Morris also alleges that as part of the original 1993 Oslo Accord “Israel agreed to . . . enter into negotiations for a final status agreement, covering refugees, borders, Jerusalem, settlements, security, and *Palestinian statehood*.”<sup>155</sup> But Israel did not and could not have agreed to negotiate a Palestinian state because at the time Israeli leaders opposed it. It was not until 1997 that the Labor Party ratified, hesitantly, “the Palestinians’ right to self-determination,” and did “not rule out in this connection the establishment of a Palestinian state with limited sovereignty.” Its platform was silent however on the crucial question of the Palestinian state’s borders, and it explicitly stated that “Israel extends its sovereignty over the areas that are major Jewish settlement blocs”<sup>156</sup>—a caveat that in effect preempts the possibility of a viable Palestinian state. The 1999 Likud platform, which is still operative today, “flatly rejects the establishment of a Palestinian Arab state west of the Jordan river.”<sup>157</sup>

The old Morris reported that since the mid-1970s Palestinian leaders had been “inching toward moderation” by signaling acquiescence in a two-state solution, notwithstanding intransigent Israeli opposition to it: “The idea of a Palestinian state emerging alongside Israel . . . was first implicitly posited at the PNC [Palestine National Council] meeting in 1974”; “the concluding ‘Political Statement’ [of the November 1988 PNC meeting in Algiers] was moderate and innovative, and therefore historically significant, in content. . . . It

accepted the need for a ‘comprehensive political settlement’ and direct negotiations with Israel, and posited the convocation of an international conference on the basis of Resolutions 242 and 338”; “Even Arafat’s willingness . . . to go yet further and in effect renounce the Palestinian National Charter—in May 1989 he told French interviewers ‘C’est caduc’ (meaning ‘it is null and void’)—failed to get a bite out of Peres and Rabin, let alone [Yitzhak] Shamir”; “PLO moves toward moderation had failed to elicit a matching echo from the Israeli government”; in the early 1990s “the PLO agreed to recognize and make peace with Israel, and to establish a self-governing entity in a small part of Palestine”; on “September 9, 1993, Arafat stated that the PLO ‘recognize[s] the right of the State of Israel to exist in peace and security,’ ‘accepts UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338,’ commits itself to the peace process and ‘to a peaceful resolution of the conflict’”; “On April 24 [1996], the PNC, meeting in Gaza, voted . . . to amend the covenant to remove those articles calling for the elimination of Israel.”<sup>158</sup> Although he took note of an occasional ambiguity in the Palestinian record that the “Israeli Right” would pounce on,<sup>159</sup> the overarching conclusion of the old Morris’s comprehensive history was that already “by 1988 the moderating process had ripened sufficiently for the [PLO] to publicly and formally declare its readiness for a ‘two-state solution,’ implying acceptance and recognition of Israel.”<sup>160</sup>

In yet another awesome feat of historical engineering, the new Morris manages to undo this “moderating process” that climaxed in a “readiness for a ‘two-state solution.’” He now alleges that the “Palestinian national movement started life with a vision and goal of a Palestinian Muslim Arab-majority state in all of Palestine—a one-state ‘solution’—and *continues to espouse and aim to establish such a state down to the present day.*”<sup>161</sup> Those who dare suggest otherwise—including, it would appear, the old Morris—he promiscuously accuses of “mendacity” (Morris’s favorite epithet).<sup>162</sup>

In support of his new spin on the historical record, Morris does not so much revise as *reverse* his old findings: “Arafat and company saw 1974 [i.e., the PNC meeting] merely as the acceptance of the need for the elimination of Israel in stages rather than in one fell swoop”; “Many Westerners

and some Israelis saw the document [of the November 1988 PNC meeting] as implying acceptance of Israel's existence. . . . But of course it was not"; "Arafat declared [in December 1988] that the PNC accepted Resolutions 242 and 338 as a basis for negotiations—in truth, it had not."<sup>163</sup> *Caveat lector*: Without adducing a scrap of evidence to justify it, the new Morris has just nullified all his old findings.

The new Morris appears to concede that from 1998 the Palestinian leadership formally accepted a two-state settlement.<sup>164</sup> However he then quickly enters the qualification: "Palestinian foot-dragging and squiggling . . . had left many Israelis skeptical. . . . Did their obvious reluctance . . . not hint at the basic untrustworthiness of Israel's 'partners' in peace?" Morris leaves no doubt as to where he comes down. Whatever their formal affirmations, the new Morris avers, "Palestinian Arabs, in the deepest fibers of their being, oppose such an outcome [i.e., a two-state settlement], demanding as they did since the dawn of the national movement, all of Palestine as their patrimony."<sup>165</sup> Alas, he never reveals how he divined what lurks in the "deepest fibers of their being."

But Morris does not stop here. Even if Palestinians formally accept a two-state settlement, and even if "in the deepest fibers of their being" Palestinians accept a two-state settlement, Morris alleges that they *rationally cannot* accept a two-state settlement: "There are good objective reasons why a two-state solution . . . can have little traction even among Palestinians who, in principle, might agree to such a compromise. The division of historic Mandatory Palestine as proposed, 79 percent for the Jews and 21 percent for the Palestinian Arabs, cannot fail to leave the Arabs, all Arabs, with a deep sense of injustice, affront, and humiliation and a legitimate perception that a state consisting of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank (and perhaps large parts of East Jerusalem)—altogether some two thousand square miles—is simply not viable, politically and economically."<sup>166</sup> Let us set to one side that if what Morris says here is true, then Palestinians might have opposed the two-state settlement not because of "Islamic Judeophobia" and "their Islamic, exclusivist being," but because of their "legitimate perception"

that such a settlement was manifestly unjust. The bigger problem however is that on Morris's construction Palestinians literally cannot accept a two-state settlement: if they formally accept it, they must viscerally reject it; and if they formally and viscerally accept it, they must rationally reject it. On these terms it is child's play to demonstrate that Palestinians "continue to espouse and aim to establish . . . down to the present day" an exclusivist state in the whole of Palestine. Morris's "proof" is already contained in his premise: Palestinians oppose a two-state settlement because—even if the factual evidence proves otherwise—they *must* oppose such a settlement.

The new Morris's account of the 2000-1 Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations brokered by the United States<sup>167</sup> hews closely to the largely discredited official narrative propagated by the likes of Dennis Ross. He alleges for example that at Camp David in July 2000 "Israel made a series of proposals, each better than the last, on territory, Jerusalem, the nature of the Palestinian state. Arafat consistently said 'no' and demanded more."<sup>168</sup> The repeated rejection of a two-state offer by Arafat during the 2000-1 negotiations, the new Morris concludes, demonstrated that the Palestinians were "still wedded to the one-state solution and wanted all of Palestine."<sup>169</sup>

The actual facts however speak otherwise. The points of contention in these negotiations included borders, East Jerusalem, settlements, and refugees. It is undoubtedly true that Barak "expressed astonishment and anger at the Palestinian rejection of the most far-reaching Israeli concessions ever offered,"<sup>170</sup> but, as already shown,<sup>171</sup> from the applicable standard of international law *all* the concessions during the 2000-1 negotiations came from the Palestinian side: although legally entitled to the whole of the West Bank and Gaza, Palestinians were willing to cede a small percentage to Israel (as part of a one-to-one land swap); although legally entitled to the whole of East Jerusalem, Palestinians were willing to divide it with Israel; although legally the Jewish settlements had to be dismantled, Palestinians were willing to let Israel retain the bulk of them; although legally the refugees had a right to return and compensation, Palestinians were largely willing to relinquish the right of return.

In order to capture the logic behind Palestinian rejection of Barak's offer at Camp David, one can do no better than quote Morris himself. "During the 1980s and 1990s," he wrote in 2001,

the PLO leadership had gradually accepted, or seemed to accept, history's verdict: That Israel, in its post-1948 borders, was there to stay—keeping 78 percent of historic "Palestine." But the PLO wanted the remaining 22 percent, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, regarding this as a modicum of justice. At Camp David Barak had endorsed the establishment of a Palestinian state; but he had proposed that it make do with 84-90 percent of that 22 percent—and to underline his point had insisted that the bulk of the settlers and large concentrations of Jewish West Bank settlements be incorporated into Israel. Also Israel was to control the territory between a greatly enlarged "Jerusalem" and Jericho, effectively cutting the core of the future Palestinian state in two, and giving Israel control of the border crossings between the Palestinian state and Egypt and Jordan. To Palestinians, this was not fair or just.<sup>172</sup>

It cannot be doubted that Morris's biggest obstacle as he endeavors to reintegrate himself with a society gone drunk on self-righteous delusion is his own past sobriety.

Taking yet another tack, the new Morris alleges that even if Palestinian leaders did historically support a two-state settlement, it is "in a practical sense meaningless, since there was, and is, no Palestinian Arab state and none has yet come into being."<sup>173</sup> But one might suppose that an historian of the conflict would find it meaningful whether Israeli or Palestinian intransigence has caused the endless bloodshed. Moreover, hasn't the new Morris devoted the whole of his energies to proving that "Islamic Judeophobia" and the "Islamic, exclusivist being" are the *fons et origo* of the Israel-Palestine conflict?

Instead of focusing on the past, Morris counsels that we direct our attention to Hamas because it is now the dominant presence on the Palestinian political landscape. He quotes at extraordinary length from the notorious Hamas covenant; cautions the naive reader that “Hamas’s mindset is deadly serious” (his proof being, “I don’t remember a Hamas leader cracking a joke”); and submits that Hamas’s ideology and leading role preclude “an accommodation with Israel based on a two-state settlement.”<sup>174</sup> Were any doubts still to linger Morris gestures to Hamas’s “consistent statements” rejecting a two-state settlement and then reiterates that “Hamas has the virtue of speaking clearly and consistently.”<sup>175</sup> Can Morris possibly be unaware that, as the publication of an official U.S. government agency pointed out, Hamas “has, in practice, moved well beyond its charter . . . has been carefully and consciously adjusting its political program for years and has sent repeated signals that it is ready to begin a process of coexisting with Israel”?<sup>176</sup>

According to the new Morris, not just Palestinian leaders but the Palestinian public as well has effectively opposed a two-state settlement, whereas “the *overwhelming majority* of Israelis, as opinion polls have consistently shown *for decades*, support partition and a two-state settlement of the conflict.”<sup>177</sup> Scrutiny of the available poll data gives keen insight into the trustworthiness of the new Morris as a scholar. An authoritative 1990 Hebrew University poll of Israelis found:

Possible final settlement	% support
Palestinian state in all territories	9.1
Palestinian state in Gaza Strip only	8.9
Territorial compromise and forming a Palestinian-Jordanian state	12.6
Territorial compromise with Jordan without a third state between Israel and Jordan	19.0

Thus, less than 10 percent of Israelis supported the international consensus while, even to judge by Morris’s fanciful “two-state solution” that negates

Palestinian self-determination, total support still came to under 50 percent.<sup>178</sup> Israeli support for any variant of a Palestinian state stood at only 21 percent in 1987 and 35 percent in 1993, and even as late as 1999 only 6 percent of Israeli Jews fully accepted and another 18 percent gave qualified acceptance to a Palestinian state on the pre-1967 borders (13 percent and 18 percent respectively for all Israelis including Palestinian citizens).<sup>179</sup> During the second intifada Israeli support for a two-state settlement approximating the international consensus hovered around 40 percent.<sup>180</sup> Yet the new Morris distills from the poll data that the “overwhelming majority of Israelis” have “for decades” supported a two-state settlement.

In another of his signature statistical forays, the new Morris alleges that “the idea of transfer . . . vis-à-vis Israel’s Arab minority or the Arabs of the occupied territories or both” has been supported “at various times over the past 60 years, especially during Arab assaults on Israel” by “10 to 30 percent of the Jewish population.”<sup>181</sup> Yet, the old Morris reported that circa 1950 virtually the “entire nation” of Israeli Jews supported “the expulsion of Israel’s post-1948 Arab minority,” while during the first intifada, he reported, “one opinion poll indicated that almost half the electorate looked to some sort of transfer solution.”<sup>182</sup> Nearly half of Israelis polled during the second intifada supported expelling all Palestinians in the occupied territories and one-third supported expelling the Israeli Arabs, while in the course of the past two decades fully 50-70 percent of Israeli Jews have consistently supported the use of state inducements to rid Israel of its Palestinian minority.<sup>183</sup>

Morris concedes that polls of Palestinian public opinion “have often concluded that most Palestinians, at least in the West Bank and Gaza, support a two-state settlement.” But beyond contesting the veracity of such polls Morris alleges that other data belie them: “there is almost complete unanimity among the Palestinians in support of the ‘right of return,’ the implementation of which would necessarily subvert any two-state settlement”; Palestinians “are equally unanimous in denying the legitimacy of Zionism and Israel,” “Israel’s Jewishness,” and “Israel as a ‘Jewish state.’”<sup>184</sup> Morris’s real quarrel however appears to be not with Palestinians but international

law and enlightened public opinion. The Palestinian right to return and compensation has been repeatedly validated by the United Nations General Assembly and respected human rights organizations such as HRW and Amnesty.<sup>185</sup> Furthermore, the terms of the international consensus for resolving the Israel-Palestine conflict do not require Palestinian recognition of the “legitimacy of Zionism and Israel” (neither Egypt nor Jordan recognized such a “legitimacy” when they signed peace treaties with Israel), while it is hard to reckon how Palestinians can recognize Israel as a “Jewish state” if Jews themselves barely agree on what it means to be a Jew, let alone what it means for a state to be “Jewish.”<sup>186</sup>

The new Morris mounts the case that Palestinians have always rejected a two-state settlement and will not be sated with less than the whole of Palestine. Although the allegation is highly dubious it nonetheless piques the curiosity just how he proposes to resolve the conflict. Yale University Press announces on the jacket of Morris’s latest book that “he arrives at a new way of thinking about the discord, injecting a ray of hope in a region where it is most surely needed.” What is this ray of hope?

Morris alleges that Israel cannot withdraw from the West Bank until “the IDF acquires the technological capability to protect its population centers from short-range missile attacks.” But, alas, “it is unclear whether such a system will be operational before 2013 and whether it will be effective”; indeed, the costs involved “could impoverish Israel and render the defensive systems ultimately inoperative.”<sup>187</sup> It is difficult to make out the ray of hope, let alone justice, in holding the elementary human rights of Palestinians hostage to Israel’s budgetary constraints. Incidentally, do Arabs get to occupy Israel until they can protect themselves against *its* periodic rampages?

But far be it from Morris to despair. His so-called new way of thinking is to revive the Allon Plan “of a partition of Palestine into Israel, more or less along its pre-1967 borders, and an Arab state, call it Palestinian-Jordanian, that fuses the bulk of the West Bank and East Jerusalem and the east bank, the present-day Kingdom of Jordan.” Morris does not pretend that Palestinians are likely in the future to acquiesce in a settlement that they have



forcefully opposed in the past, but ever espying a glimmer of hope he points to a solution: Jordan's "relatively powerful army and security services . . . would provide the possibility of reining in the militants."<sup>188</sup> No doubt Jordan's torture chambers will also come in handy.

It might be supposed that such a "two-state settlement"<sup>189</sup> violates the basic right to self-determination, but the new Morris also sets the naive reader straight on this misapprehension. For, according to him, Palestinians, Arabs, Muslims—"they" are not like "us"; "they" don't attach the value "we" do to human rights. Thus Morris dots his text with these *aperçus*: "Palestinian spokesmen regularly invoked slogans like democracy, majority will, and one man, one vote—catchphrases and norms that, in fact, were completely alien to their history and social and political ethos and mindset"; "Western liberals like or pretend to view Palestinian Arabs, indeed all Arabs, as Scandinavians, and refuse to recognize that peoples, for good historical, cultural and social reasons, are different and behave differently in similar or identical sets of circumstances"; "Palestinian Arabs, like the world's other Muslim Arab communities, are deeply religious and have no respect for democratic values and no tradition of democratic governance."<sup>190</sup>

In his own research on the 1948 war Morris qualifies his every conclusion with a seemingly endless string of caveats. He shows no compunction however about spewing forth gross generalizations about the history, ethos, mindset, culture and society of "the world's . . . Muslim-Arab communities." He possesses no known expertise on the Muslim-Arab world and cites no sources for any of his allegations. Poll data do not support claims of his, such as that Muslim-Arab communities devalue democracy.<sup>191</sup> He appears to have culled his grand insights from *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Orientalist Stereotypes*. After the Egyptian people erupted in revolt against the dictatorship of Hosni Mubarak, Morris knowingly observed that "what Egyptians really want" was "probably" their "material betterment" and "not political freedom and human rights." If Westerners believed otherwise, it was because they "don't know Arabic." As it happens, neither does he.<sup>192</sup>

Lest there be any doubt on the chasm separating “them” from “us,” Morris adduces this clincher: “The value placed on human life and the rule of (secular) law is completely different—as exhibited, in Israel itself, in the vast hiatus [sic] between Jewish and Arab perpetration of crimes and lethal road traffic violations. Arabs, to put it simply, proportionally commit far more crimes (and not only ones connected to property) and commit far more lethal traffic violations than do Jews. In large measure, this is a function of different value systems (such as the respect accorded to human life and the rule of law).”<sup>193</sup> Like some crazed xenophobe scratching out his manifesto while holed up in a dimly lit garret, Morris collates in a sprawling endnote an ethnic breakdown of crime statistics obtained from “Chief Inspector Hamutal Sabagh” and “in my possession.”<sup>194</sup> But couldn’t the data demonstrate not that Arabs are intrinsically different but that like minorities suffering discrimination elsewhere they are more vulnerable to the criminal justice system? The disparity in auto fatalities should according to Morris convince all but “the most disconnected and unrealistic of minds” that Jews couldn’t possibly live together with Arabs under one roof. Indeed, knowing what we all know about women drivers, isn’t it verily a miracle that men have managed to live with *them* for so long?



It remains to reflect if only briefly and speculatively on the roots of Morris’s bizarre transformation from a relatively judicious liberal historian into a ranting right-wing crackpot. Morris proclaims that it was the Palestinians’ rejection of Barak’s “generous offer” at Camp David and the Clinton Parameters that opened his eyes to their insidious nature.<sup>195</sup> But this explanation does not withstand a moment’s scrutiny: the generous offer was largely a myth, while both the Palestinians and Israel accepted the Clinton Parameters with reservations.<sup>196</sup> The collapse of these negotiations was less the context than the pretext for Morris’s political epiphany. To make sense of his (d)evolution we must look elsewhere.

The late Israeli sociologist Baruch Kimmerling once noted Morris's "great arrogance and unique talent for public relations."<sup>197</sup> Morris has always been ambitious and accordingly cautious. While making his name in the academic establishment as a Young Turk, Morris finely calibrated his position on the political spectrum near enough the left pole and far enough from the mainstream Old Guard to draw attention to himself, but not so far to the left that he lost respectability and not so near the Old Guard that he lacked novelty. In the tiny space he carved out, there was room enough only for him, which is just how Morris liked it.

Morris feigned being the only objective historian standing above the political fray and counseled against politicizing scholarship: "The moment the historian looks over his shoulder, begins to calculate how others might utilize his work, and allows this to influence his findings and conclusions, he is well on his way down that slippery slope leading to official history and propaganda."<sup>198</sup> But in fact Morris has himself always calculated the effect of his every word. He would complain of being misunderstood when in fact he was perfectly understood. He alleged that others simplified his complex findings whereas the problem was the complexity not of his positions but of his *positionings*. He would mitigate the impact of each of his politically-charged conclusions with a contrary conclusion, so that he could be claimed by neither side, or so that he could disown both sides and stand alone in splendid isolation. It was a delicate balancing act that often appeared schizophrenic. When crossing swords with an establishment Israeli historian such as Shabtai Teveth, he thrust so forcefully you might mistake him for Palestinian scholar Edward Said, but when Said accurately paraphrased his findings, Morris sounded like Teveth as he chastised Said for being a propagandist.<sup>199</sup>

It seems Morris now aspires to become Israel's court historian. He would not be the first ambitious Young Turk wanting to replace the Old Guard as he gets on in years and they pass from the scene. It is also true that the political left, and the tiny space Morris carved out in its vicinity, barely exists any

longer in Israeli life. He could be either a cheerleader like *Haaretz* columnist Ari Shavit, who once wrote a chilling eyewitness account of the Israeli occupation in Gaza,<sup>200</sup> but in latter days justified the 2008-9 Israeli invasion of Gaza,<sup>201</sup> or he could be a marginalized pariah like *Haaretz* columnist Gideon Levy, who was pilloried by what passes today for the Israeli left because he wouldn't abide the invasion.<sup>202</sup>

Morris's ego was palpably too big for the role of marginal pariah, but to become a court historian he had to forsake both his professional calling and political sensibility. It is no longer possible to both be an honest historian and perpetuate the *Exodus* version of Israel's past, and it is no longer possible to defend Israel on the basis of liberal values. To gain entry into the elite tier of Israel's historiographic establishment, however, it has always required recycling the mythical version of Israel's past and staunchly defending the Israeli state. It was therefore predictable and inevitable that Morris, eyeing greener pastures, would jettison his original framework that cast Zionism as the conflict's cause and Palestinian resistance as the effect. But what would he substitute for it?

Morris's first tack in his new role of *fidei defensor* was an ideological throwback to another era. He defended the "overall final good" of a Jewish state by resorting to 19th century social-Darwinist justifications. Thus, he echoed Theodore Roosevelt's rationale for the displacement and dispossession of Native Americans: it is a regrettable necessity of progress that "savage and barbaric peoples" get plowed under.<sup>203</sup> The crudity of this posture was such that Morris came under blistering attack abroad. Even in the retrograde moral climate after September 11, when the virtues of Empire were once again being heralded, this defense of Zionism would not wash: some liberal values have become so ingrained in Western culture that everyone has to make, at any rate publicly, a bow to them. Having no other plausible option, and taking flight from the historical record, Morris reinserted his history in a hoary Muslim anti-Semitism. Far from initiating the conflict, Zionism emerged in his reconfigured narrative as just another chapter in the annals of Arab loathing of Jews, while the Zionist settlers metamorphosed

into innocent victims of this immemorial hatred. The root cause of the conflict, according to Morris as he reinvented himself by customizing his history, was and remains to this day “Islamic Judeophobia.” His ideological bona fides now in order, Morris stood on the threshold of acceptance.

But Morris had to compensate for the double personal burden of having once been both a conscientious objector in a highly militarized society and a thorn in the side of the militant academic establishment that he now sought to join. Thus he conspicuously placed himself at Defense Minister Ehud Barak’s side, and at every opportunity volunteered to serve as a quasi-official emissary of Israeli militarism. In anticipation of its invasion of Gaza, Israel’s propaganda agencies geared up for a PR blitz.<sup>204</sup> After Israel launched the attack at the end of 2008 and proceeded to obliterate everything in sight, Morris promptly published an op-ed in the *New York Times* pushing all the right buttons (“many Israelis feel that the walls . . . are closing in . . . much as they felt in early June 1967”) and praising “Israel’s highly efficient air assault” on Gaza.<sup>205</sup> Meanwhile, as Israel keeps endeavoring to recruit Washington for an assault on Iran, Morris continues to make the rounds in the West repeatedly warning, Cassandra-like, that if the Americans do not launch a conventional attack Israel would be compelled and justified in launching a nuclear strike to prevent a “second Holocaust.”<sup>206</sup>

Still, it has not been so much his personal liabilities as the liabilities of Israeli society that have nudged Morris ever more rightward. To become Israel’s court historian he had to keep pace ideologically with it. It is social rather than biographical factors that at bottom account for his political odyssey. If Morris has gone berserk, it is because he aspires to be the official storyteller of a nation that itself has gone over the cliff. His degeneration vividly illustrates that except by resorting to a mishmash of lies and lunacies, deceits and delusions, it is no longer possible for Israel’s defenders to justify its policy.



were costs for him in disappointing Clinton” (ibid., p. 372). It is almost certain that Ross did not speak in this tone to President Hafez al-Assad during parallel negotiations on the Syrian track, and the reason is not hard to find. “Barak was also far more attracted to dealing with Hafez al-Assad than to dealing with Yasir Arafat,” Ross reports. “In his eyes, Assad was everything Arafat wasn’t. He commanded a real state, with a real army, with thousands of tanks and hundreds of missiles” (ibid., p. 509; cf. p. 90). Like Barak, Ross evidently respected Assad: the Syrian strongman disposed of real military might whereas Arafat did not. In the moral calculus of those who only understand the language of force, only he who commands force deserves respect.

- 152 *Democracy Now!*, Transcript (14 February 2006) (Ben-Ami); Maoz, *Defending the Holy Land*, p. 476; cf. p. 493.

#### INTRODUCTION TO PART IV

- 1 See Chapter Four.

#### PART IV/CHAPTER TEN

- 1 Benny Morris, *1948 and After: Israel and the Palestinians* (Oxford: 1990), p. 6.
- 2 David Remnick, “Blood and Sand: A revisionist Israeli historian revisits his country’s origins,” *New Yorker* (5 May 2008).
- 3 Shlomo Ben-Ami, *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace: The Israeli-Arab tragedy* (New York: 2006).
- 4 Norman G. Finkelstein, *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict* (New York: 1995; expanded second paperback edition, 2003), chapter 3.
- 5 The designations used throughout this chapter of “old” Morris and “new” Morris do not correspond to a precise cut-off date. Especially in his middle period it is not always easy to mark off the “old” from the “new” Morris.
- 6 New York: 1987.
- 7 New York: 1993.
- 8 New York: 1999.
- 9 London: 2003.
- 10 New York: 2008.
- 11 New Haven: 2009.
- 12 See Chapter Eight.
- 13 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, pp. 652–54, 61.
- 14 Shabtai Teveth, *The Evolution of “Transfer” in Zionist Thinking* (Tel Aviv: 1989), p. 17.
- 15 Ibid., pp. 2, 6. Anita Shapira, *Land and Power: The Zionist resort to force, 1881–1948* (Oxford: 1992), pp. 285–86. See also Finkelstein, *Image and Reality*, p. 103 and sources cited.
- 16 Morris, *Birth*, p. 25.
- 17 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, p. 139.
- 18 Benny Morris, “Revisiting the Palestinian Exodus of 1948,” in Eugene L. Rogan and Avi Shlaim, eds., *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the history of 1948* (Cambridge:

- 2001), p. 40. The British proposed in 1937, and the Zionists seconded, transfer along-side partition to resolve the Palestine conflict.
- 19 Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (Cambridge: 2004).
  - 20 *Ibid.*, p. 60.
  - 21 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, pp. 37, 46, 49.
  - 22 *Ibid.*, p. 653.
  - 23 It could still be argued, and it is Morris's contention, that although creating a Jewish state necessarily entailed the ethnic cleansing of Palestine, the establishment of a Jewish state was nonetheless a greater moral good. Even in his original, liberal phase, Morris put both moral and historical culpability for the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem on the Arabs because inter alia they rejected the U.N. Partition Resolution and initiated the 1948 war. See Benny Morris, "The Eel and History," *Tikkun* (January-February 1990), Morris, *Road*, p. 236, and Finkelstein, *Image and Reality*, pp. 81, 222n8.
  - 24 Morris, 1948, p. 407; Benny Morris, "Fallible Memory," *New Republic* (3 February 2011).
  - 25 Morris, *Birth . . . Revisited*, p. 43.
  - 26 Benny Morris, "And Now for Some Facts," *New Republic* (28 April 2006).
  - 27 Morris, 1948, p. 407.
  - 28 Morris, "Fallible Memory."
  - 29 Morris, *One State*, p. 68.
  - 30 *Ibid.*, p. 67.
  - 31 *Ibid.*, p. 105.
  - 32 Morris, 1948, p. 409.
  - 33 *Ibid.*, p. 408.
  - 34 Morris, *One State*, p. 179.
  - 35 Morris, 1948, pp. 393, 394; Morris, *One State*, p. 90. In one place he does grant albeit grudgingly that Arab opposition to Zionist settlers resulted not only from the "threat to the 'Arab-ness' of their country" but "perhaps, down the road, to their very presence in the land" (*ibid.*, p. 37).
  - 36 Morris, 1948, p. 393.
  - 37 Morris, *One State*, pp. 188–89.
  - 38 *Ibid.*, p. 19.
  - 39 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, p. 136.
  - 40 Morris, 1948, pp. 394–95.
  - 41 *Ibid.*, p. 395.
  - 42 Morris, *One State*, pp. 53–54; Morris, 1948, pp. 395–96.
  - 43 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, p. 123.
  - 44 Morris, 1948, p. 395.
  - 45 Morris, *One State*, p. 106.
  - 46 Yehoshua Porath, *The Palestinian National Movement: From riots to rebellion* (London: 1970), pp. 91–92, 165–66, 297.
  - 47 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, pp. 570, 573, 574, 577–79.
  - 48 *Ibid.*, p. 562.



- 49 Ibid., pp. 564, 567-68.
- 50 Ibid., p. 662 (from supplementary chapter to 2001 paperback edition).
- 51 Morris, *One State*, p. 52.
- 52 *Palestine Royal Commission Report* (London: HMSO, 1937), pp. 76, 94, 110, 131, 136, 363.
- 53 Morris, *One State*, p. 109.
- 54 Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: 1996).
- 55 Norman G. Finkelstein and Ruth Bettina Birn, *A Nation on Trial: The Goldhagen thesis and historical truth* (New York: 1998), pp. 9-10, 25-26.
- 56 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, pp. 9-12.
- 57 New York: 1984.
- 58 Morris, *1948 and After*, pp. 14-16; Morris, *Road*, pp. 148-49.
- 59 Morris, "And Now for Some Facts" (my emphasis).
- 60 Morris, *1948*, pp. 399-400, 405-6; see also Morris, "And Now for Some Facts," where he estimates the number of Palestinians killed at 8,000.
- 61 "Benny Morris responds," *Tikkun* (March-April 1989).
- 62 See below.
- 63 Morris, *Birth*, pp. 85-86.
- 64 Benny Morris, "Response to Finkelstein and Masalha," in *Journal of Palestine Studies* (Autumn 1991), p. 105. For Morris's disingenuous reporting of Israeli atrocities in 1948, see also Finkelstein, *Image and Reality*, pp. 54-56, and Saleh Abdel Jawad, "Zionist Massacres: The creation of the Palestinian refugee problem in the 1948 war," in Eyal Benvenisti, Chaim Gans and Sari Hanafi, eds., *Israel and the Palestinian Refugees* (Berlin: 2007), pp. 59-127.
- 65 Zeev Maoz, *Defending the Holy Land: A critical analysis of Israel's security and foreign policy* (Ann Arbor: 2006), pp. 47-79.
- 66 Morris, *Border Wars*, pp. 85, 271-72, 427.
- 67 Ibid., pp. 178-79; cf. pp. 229-30.
- 68 Ibid., pp. 279-80. For specific Israeli forays designed to "provoke war with Egypt, using retaliatory strikes that would push Egypt into counter-attacking," cf. *ibid.*, pp. 358, 364-65, 391.
- 69 Ibid., p. 85. In light of the new Morris's assertion, cited below, that, except for a subsequent Egyptian arms deal with the Soviet bloc, Israel's February 1955 raid on Gaza "probably had very little to do with the substance of [Nasser's] policies" after the attack, it merits quoting several more representative passages from *Border Wars*: "March 1955 witnessed a radical change in Egyptian policy towards Israel" (*ibid.*, p. 91); "The available evidence overwhelmingly suggests that Nasser and the RCC [Revolutionary Command Council] were genuinely shaken by the raid, and that the regime radically changed course in its wake. . . . The raid apparently had an immediate and profound effect on Nasser. . . . He no longer believed in Israel's professions of peacefulness. . . . Egypt, Nasser said, could not 'afford to sustain another [such] defeat' without retaliating" (*ibid.*, pp. 328-29); "within three weeks [of the raid] the Egyptians began to take a 'low-profile' revenge along the Gaza border" (*ibid.*, p. 331);

"Before 28 February 1955, attacks across the Gaza frontier into Israel had been local and sporadic, not state policy; thereafter they were promoted and directed by Cairo. Before 28 February, Cairo generally had pursued a 'policy of restraint' . . . After Gaza, everything changed" (ibid., p. 334); "Systematic murder and sabotage raids, organized from Cairo by the Egyptian army, began only in the wake of the Gaza Raid" (ibid., p. 338); "after the Gaza Raid Nasser had promised that no more IDF attacks would go unanswered" (ibid., p. 345); "The IDF raid on Gaza triggered a qualitative and quantitative rise in the level of Israeli-Arab, and specifically Israeli-Egyptian, hostility and violence. Egypt responded to the raid by a policy of low-level harassment along the frontiers" (ibid., p. 355); "Israel's raid on the Egyptian military camp in Gaza on 28 February 1955 clearly resulted in a major policy switch in Cairo. Egyptian soldiers and military intelligence agents unleashed a continuous revenge-oriented campaign of sabotage and murder along the Gaza Strip frontier" (ibid., p. 413); "Ben-Gurion's return to the Cabinet and the Gaza raid killed 'the [Nasser] policy of restraint' . . . Before the raid, there was no confrontational policy of harassment and guerrilla warfare. Afterwards, there clearly was" (ibid., pp. 426-27).

70 Ibid., p. 428.

71 Ibid.

72 Ibid., pp. 46-54, 137 ("5,000"), 411-12 ("vast bulk"), 416.

73 Ibid., pp. 166-72 ("state-authorized," "overall attitude" at p. 166), 407-9 ("massacres").

74 Ibid., pp. 97-100, 412, 415.

75 Morris, "Fallible Memory."

76 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, p. 509; see also ibid., p. 512.

77 Ibid., p. 501; see also Morris, *Road*, p. 236, "the IDF's Operation Litani of March 1978, in which [Israel] briefly occupied southern Lebanon and killed, captured or drove out hundreds of Palestinian gunmen."

78 Human Rights Watch, *Civilian Pawns: Laws of war violations and the use of weapons on the Israel-Lebanon border* (New York: 1996). Still higher figures are cited in other authoritative sources (see Chomsky and Fisk below).

79 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, pp. 523 ("reluctant," "avoid"), 525 ("care"), 533 ("massive," "traumatized," "pinpoint").

80 Noam Chomsky, *Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel and the Palestinians*, updated edition (Boston: 1999); Robert Fisk, *Pity the Nation: The abduction of Lebanon* (New York: 1990).

81 Dov Yermiya, *My War Diary: Lebanon, June 5-July 1, 1982* (Boston: 1984), pp. 3 ("machine"), 10 ("hospital"), 18 ("Thousands"), 26 ("permeated," "retaliation"), 27 ("practice"), 28 ("Auschwitz"), 52 ("overtaken"), 68-69 ("game"), 75 ("disgusting"), 80-81 ("step"), 122 ("firepower"), 123 ("barrages").

82 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, p. 523; Yermiya, *War Diary*, pp. 122-23.

83 Fisk, *Pity the Nation*, pp. 314-15 (his emphasis).

84 Maoz, *Defending the Holy Land*, pp. 206, 630n15.

85 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, p. 639.

- 86 Amnesty International, *Unlawful Killings during Operation “Grapes of Wrath”* (London: July 1996).
- 87 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, p. 601.
- 88 Ibid., pp. 340–43, 568.
- 89 Ibid., p. 561; see also *ibid.*, p. 580.
- 90 Ibid., p. 588.
- 91 Ibid., pp. 587, 591, 599.
- 92 Finkelstein, *Image and Reality*, pp. xxix–xxx.
- 93 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, p. 327; see also *ibid.*, p. 338.
- 94 Morris, *One State*, p. 70.
- 95 Ibid., p. 123.
- 96 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, pp. 342, 592, 596, 601.
- 97 Ibid., (supplementary 2001 chapter), pp. 665 (“extreme,” “television”), 668 (“collateral”), 669 (“cautious”); Benny Morris, “Peace, No Chance,” *Guardian* (21 February 2002) (“great restraint,” “virtual,” “straight”); Benny Morris and Ehud Barak, “Camp David and After—Continued,” *New York Review of Books* (27 June 2002) (“torrent”); Benny Morris, “This Conflict Is about Israel’s—Not the Arabs’—Survival,” *Guardian* (8 February 2006) (“discrimination”); Morris, “And Now for Some Facts” (“avoid,” “armed”); Morris, *One State*, p. 151 (“great care,” “Arab and Western”).
- 98 *The Mitchell Report* (4 May 2001), section heading “What Happened?”. The report was submitted by a committee convened to investigate the causes of the second intifada. It was chaired by former U.S. Senator George Mitchell.
- 99 Ben Kaspi, “When the Intifada Erupted, It Was Finally Clear to All: Israel is not a state with an army but an army with a state,” *Maariv* (6 September 2001).
- 100 Morris, *One State*, p. 140.
- 101 Amnesty International, *Excessive Use of Lethal Force* (London: 2000), pp. 5–6.
- 102 Human Rights Watch, *Investigation into the Unlawful Use of Force in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Northern Israel* (New York: 2000), p. 1.
- 103 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, p. 664 (supplementary 2001 chapter).
- 104 B’Tselem (Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories), *Trigger Happy: Unjustified shooting and violation of the open-fire regulations during the al-Aqsa intifada* (Jerusalem: 2002), p. 16.
- 105 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, p. 665 (supplementary 2001 chapter).
- 106 B’Tselem, *Trigger Happy*, p. 7.
- 107 Morris, *One State*, p. 151.
- 108 Amnesty International, “No One Is Safe: The spiral of killings and destruction must stop,” press release (29 September 2003; my emphasis).
- 109 Alex Fishman and Sima Kadmon, “We Are Seriously Concerned about the Fate of the State of Israel,” *Yediot Ahronot* (14 November 2003).
- 110 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, p. 667 (supplementary 2001 chapter); Morris, *One State*, p. 151.
- 111 Amnesty International, *Israel Must End Its Policy of Assassinations* (London: July 2003), pp. 4–6.

- 112 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, p. 668 (supplementary 2001 chapter).
- 113 B'Tselem (Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories), *Israel's Assassination Policy: Extrajudicial executions*, position paper (Jerusalem: 2001); Public Committee against Torture in Israel (PCATT) and LAW (The Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights), *The Assassination Policy of the State of Israel* (2002), p. 76. See also Norman G. Finkelstein, *Beyond Chutzpah: On the misuse of anti-Semitism and the abuse of history* (Berkeley: 2005; expanded paperback edition, 2008), pp. 131–41.
- 114 Lily Galili, "Reserve Pilots to Refuse Liquidations," *Haaretz* (19 September 2003); Amos Harel and Lily Galili, "Air Force to Oust Refusenik Pilots," *Haaretz* (23 September 2003).
- 115 Morris and Barak, "Camp David and After—Continued."
- 116 Human Rights Watch, *Jenin: IDF military operations* (New York: 2002); Amnesty International, *Shielded from Scrutiny: IDF violations in Jenin and Nablus* (London: 2002).
- 117 Tsadok Yeheskeli, "I Made Them A Stadium in the Middle of the Camp," *Yediot Ahronot* (31 May 2002).
- 118 Jessica Montell, "Operation Defensive Shield: The propaganda war and the reality," *Tikkun* (July–August 2002).
- 119 Morris, "And Now for Some Facts"; Peter Bouckaert, letter, *New Republic* (19 June 2006).
- 120 Uzi Benziman, "Until Proved Otherwise," *Haaretz* (18 June 2006). B. Michael, "Of Liars and Hunters," *Yediot Ahronot* (3 September 2005); B. Michael, "Stop the Lying!," *Yediot Ahronot* (5 September 2008).
- 121 Morris, *One State*, p. 203n1.
- 122 See Chapter Five.
- 123 Quoted in Yermiya, *War Diary*, p. 149.
- 124 In one of the first studies by an Israeli new historian, Simha Flapan sought to qualify this Palestinian opposition to partition but subsequent scholarship has not borne out his research (*The Birth of Israel: Myths and realities* (New York: 1987), pp. 55–79). For the rationale behind Palestinian rejection of the 1947 Partition Resolution, see esp. Walid Khalidi, "Revisiting the UNGA Partition Resolution," *Journal of Palestine Studies* (Autumn 1997).
- 125 Shabtei Teveth, *Ben-Gurion and the Palestinian Arabs: From peace to war* (New York: 1985), pp. 187–88.
- 126 Morris, *1948 and After*, p. 9 (my emphasis).
- 127 Uri Ben-Eliezer, *The Making of Israeli Militarism* (Bloomington, IN: 1998), pp. 150–51 ("not final" is the author's paraphrase); Ben-Ami, *Scars of War*, p. 34.
- 128 Ben-Ami, *Scars of War*, pp. 36–38.
- 129 Morris, *Border Wars*, pp. 11–13, 401, 410–11 ("expansionist" at p. 410); Morris, *Road*, pp. 210–11 ("sections").
- 130 Morris, *Border Wars*, pp. 179, 229–30, 278–79, 332, 427; Morris, *Righteous Victims*, p. 280.

- 131 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, pp. 289–90; see also Maoz, *Defending the Holy Land*, pp. 70–71.
- 132 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, p. 298; Ben-Eliezer, *Making*, pp. 221–22.
- 133 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, p. 299.
- 134 Morris, *Border Wars*, p. 428.
- 135 Morris, *One State*, pp. 35, 38, 64.
- 136 *Ibid.*, pp. 74–75 (my emphases); see also *ibid.*, pp. 30–31, 161–62.
- 137 *Ibid.*, p. 78.
- 138 *Ibid.*
- 139 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, p. 242.
- 140 Morris, *One State*, pp. 78–79.
- 141 *Ibid.*, p. 79.
- 142 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, pp. 314, 321–25.
- 143 *Ibid.*, p. 314.
- 144 *Ibid.*, p. 321.
- 145 When citing the scholarship of others, Morris’s purpose is almost always to ridicule it. See Norman Finkelstein, “Rejoinder to Benny Morris,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* (Winter 1992), pp. 65–66.
- 146 See Chapter Nine.
- 147 See Chapter Seven.
- 148 Morris, *One State*, pp. 81–87. The only exception he allows for is a brief period after the June 1967 war.
- 149 See Chapter Nine. Morris asserts that the two-state settlement is “espoused by the international community, spearheaded by Washington” (*One State*, pp. 26–27). But judging by the documentary record, the two-state settlement “espoused by the international community” has been consistently *blocked* by Washington.
- 150 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, pp. 338, 562, 608–9.
- 151 Morris, *One State*, pp. 26, 75, 79, 85.
- 152 *Ibid.*, p. 139.
- 153 See Chapter Nine.
- 154 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, p. 673, my emphasis (supplementary 2001 chapter).
- 155 Morris, *One State*, p. 128; my emphasis.
- 156 [www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/labor.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/labor.html).
- 157 [www.knesset.gov.il/elections/knesset15/elikud\\_m.htm](http://www.knesset.gov.il/elections/knesset15/elikud_m.htm) (“west of the Jordan river” refers to the pervasive Zionist belief that Jordan is already a Palestinian state).
- 158 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, pp. 596, 606–8, 611, 621, 629.
- 159 For example, the PNC “annulled the clauses in the Covenant that called for the destruction of Israel but failed to promulgate a new covenant from which these statements were absent” (*ibid.*, p. 638; cf. p. 645).
- 160 *Ibid.*, p. 668.
- 161 Morris, *One State*, p. 167 (my emphasis).
- 162 Among those Morris accuses in *One State* of “mendacity” or being “mendacious” are Rashid Khalidi (p. 114; he is also accused on p. 169 of “pure invention”), Palestinians

generally (p. 131), Virginia Tilley (p. 182; she is also accused on p. 181 of a “whopper of truly gargantuan dimensions,” on p. 182 of the “sheer quantity of untruths . . . even by Tilley-land standards,” and on p. 220n17 of “nonsense”), and John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt (p. 217n188), while Ali Abunimah is accused of “hogwash” and “liberal blather” (pp. 168, 219n2), and Henry Siegman of being one among many “wishful thinkers and naïfs” (p. 219n9). If such epithets were used by Israel’s critics—with far more justice—to describe its defenders, would Yale University Press have allowed them to pass?

163 Ibid., pp. 120, 126.

164 Ibid., p. 132. Morris later asserts however that the text of the 2003 draft Palestinian constitution “subverts the interpretation that the PNA [Palestinian National Authority] was positing a Palestinian Arab state restricted to the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem and living alongside Israel in its post-1948 borders” (ibid., pp. 152–54). According to the leading American authority on this draft constitution, Professor Nathan Brown of George Washington University, Morris’s rendering of its context is “inaccurate” and his rendering of its content “extremely strained” (email correspondence of 12 June 2009).

165 Morris, *One State*, pp. 193–94.

166 Ibid., p. 195.

167 Ibid., pp. 133–50.

168 Ibid., p. 135.

169 Ibid., p. 173.

170 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, p. 659 (supplementary 2001 chapter).

171 See Chapter Nine.

172 Morris, *Righteous Victims*, p. 663 (supplementary 2001 chapter). It bears passing mention how the new Morris renders the Israeli offer at Camp David. In a famous 2002 presentation by Barak and Morris, they jointly made the Israeli case for why negotiations broke down. Although putting the best possible face on the Israeli offer at Camp David, Barak conceded that he did call for the West Bank to be bisected by a “razor-thin Israeli wedge running from Jerusalem through from [sic] Maale Adu-mim to the Jordan River.” Benny Morris and Ehud Barak, “Camp David and After: An exchange,” *New York Review of Books* (13 June 2002). But the new Morris alleges, “It is not clear whether, at the end of the summit, Israel still insisted on retaining [a] thin strip of territory running from Jerusalem through Maale Adumim to the Jordan River” (*One State*, p. 137). Is Morris now suggesting that Barak and he himself were guilty of “mendacity”?

173 Morris, *One State*, p. 154.

174 Ibid., pp. 154–60.

175 Ibid., p. 176.

176 Paul Scham and Osama Abu-Irshaid, “Hamas: Ideological rigidity and political flexibility,” United States Institute of Peace Special Report (June 2009), pp. 2–4. For extensive documentation, see also Norman G. Finkelstein, *“This Time We Went Too Far”: Truth and consequences of the Gaza invasion* (New York: 2010; expanded paperback edition, 2011), pp. 44–45.

- 177 Morris, *One State*, pp. 165–66 (my emphases).
- 178 Giora Goldberg, Gad Barzilai and Efraim Inbar, *The Impact of Intercommunal Conflict: The intifada and Israeli public opinion* (Jerusalem: 1991), p. 21. The other options were non-state (autonomy, annexation, etc.).
- 179 Asher Arian, *Israeli Public Opinion on National Security 2003* (Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv), p. 12; Jerusalem Media and Communication Center, poll no. 35, *On Palestinian and Israeli Attitudes towards the Future of the Peace Process* (in cooperation with Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research, Tel Aviv), p. 5.
- 180 Arian, *Israeli Public Opinion 2003*, p. 33 (tabulating Israeli support for U.S. President Bill Clinton's territorial parameters, which are the closest approximation to the international consensus for which poll data are available).
- 181 Morris, *One State*, pp. 71–72.
- 182 Morris, *Border Wars*, pp. 163–64 (“entire nation” quoting head of the Military Government); Morris, *Righteous Victims*, p. 598.
- 183 Arian, *Israeli Public Opinion 2003*, pp. 30–31; Asher Arian et al., *The 2007 Israeli Democracy Index* (Jerusalem: 2007), pp. 68, 107. See also references in Chapter Two above.
- 184 Morris, *One State*, pp. 166, 174–75, 204n5.
- 185 See Chapter Nine.
- 186 For further references and analysis, see Finkelstein, “*This Time*,” pp. 45–49.
- 187 Morris, *One State*, p. 165.
- 188 *Ibid.*, pp. 199–200.
- 189 *Ibid.*, p. 201.
- 190 *Ibid.*, pp. 90 (“catchphrases”), 169 (“Western liberals”), 170 (“no respect”).
- 191 John L. Esposito and Dalia Mogahed, *Who Speaks for Islam?: What a billion Muslims really think* (New York: 2007), chapter 2.
- 192 Benny Morris, “What Egyptians Really Want,” *National Interest* (11 February 2011). Morris was also not averse to lecturing Westerners who *have* lived in the Arab world that they did not “observe the deep complexities in Arab societies” and “never actually witnessed the viciousness, the intolerance, and the illiberalism that characterized the Muslim Middle East” in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Iraq—of which he presumably had personal, first-hand knowledge, without ever having lived in these places (Morris, “Fallible Memory”).
- 193 Morris, *One State*, p. 187.
- 194 *Ibid.*, pp. 220–21n18.
- 195 Ari Shavit, “Survival of the Fittest,” *Haaretz* (1 January 2004). In the interview he said:

My turning point began after 2000. I wasn't a great optimist even before that. True, I always voted Labor or Meretz or Sheli [a dovish party of the late 1970s], and in 1988 I refused to serve in the territories and was jailed for it, but I always doubted the intentions of the Palestinians. The events of Camp David and what followed in their wake turned the doubt into certainty. When the Palestinians rejected the proposal of Barak in July 2000 and the Clinton

- proposal in December 2000, I understood that they are unwilling to accept the two-state solution. They want it all. Lod and Acre and Jaffa.
- 196 The Clinton Parameters are discussed in the notes to Chapter Nine above.
- 197 Baruch Kimmerling, “Benny Morris’s Shocking Interview,” *History News Network* (26 January 2004; [www.hnn.us/articles/3166.html](http://www.hnn.us/articles/3166.html)).
- 198 Morris, “The Eel and History.”
- 199 *Ibid.*
- 200 See Chapter Five.
- 201 Shavit only turned against the Gaza massacre in the last days when international outrage peaked. Ari Shavit, “Gaza Op May Be Squeezing Hamas, But It’s Destroying Israel’s Soul,” *Haaretz* (16 January 2009).
- 202 A. B. Yehoshua, “An Open Letter to Gideon Levy,” *Haaretz* (16 January 2009).
- 203 Finkelstein, *Beyond Chutzpah*, pp. 14–15.
- 204 Finkelstein, “*This Time*,” p. 93.
- 205 Benny Morris, “Why Israel Feels Threatened,” *New York Times* (30 December 2008). See also Finkelstein, “*This Time*,” pp. 35–36.
- 206 Benny Morris, “A Second Holocaust?: The threat to Israel” (2 May 2008; [www.mideastfreedomforum.org/de/node/66](http://www.mideastfreedomforum.org/de/node/66)); Benny Morris, “Obama’s Nuclear Spring,” *Guardian* (24 November 2009); Benny Morris, “When Armageddon Lives Next Door,” *Los Angeles Times* (16 April 2010); Benny Morris, “On Iran, a Stark Choice,” *Los Angeles Times*, 14 February 2012. Speaking in Berlin, Morris said:  
 Realistic leaders in Washington and Jerusalem cannot allow Teheran to have the Bomb. And, in the coming months or year, must do what is necessary to halt and destroy the Iranian nuclear project. And if this involves a protracted, conventional air assault on the Iranian nuclear facilities—then so be it. The Iranians will have brought that assault on their own heads. And, if conventional weapons cannot do the job—and if Israel is forced to go the course alone, it is doubtful that its conventional capabilities will be sufficient to destroy the Iranian nuclear project—then non-conventional weaponry will have to be used to stymie the project. And many innocent Iranians will die. But the Iranians will have brought this upon themselves by bringing to power and leaving in power a leadership that will have forced Israelis to do what was necessary in order to survive. (“A Second Holocaust”)

## CONCLUSION

- 1 In response to pressing political developments, this writer completed in the interim three manuscripts, “*This Time We Went Too Far*”: *Truth and consequences of the Gaza invasion* (New York: 2010; expanded paperback edition, 2011), *Goldstone Recants: Richard Goldstone renews Israel’s license to kill* (New York: 2011), and a forthcoming book on resolving the Israel–Palestine conflict.
- 2 Daniel Septimus, “Reading between the Lines: Satire and the Shoah,” *Jerusalem Post* (3 May 2007); Tom A. Peters, “An Acerbic Look at the Holocaust Industry,” *Christian Science Monitor* (29 May 2007). See also Alvin H. Rosenfeld, *The End of the Holocaust* (Bloomington, IN: 2011).